

# INSIDE STORY OF TIBET



1967

by  
*Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake*

AFRO-ASIAN WRITERS BUREAU

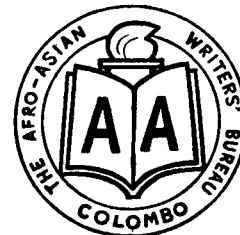
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*Michael  
Harrison  
1970*

"A U.S. special agent named Lowell Thomas visited Tibet in the summer of 1949 to engage in conspiratorial activities in Lhasa against the Central People's Government of China. After returning to the United States of America, Lowell Thomas wrote a letter to the Kasha headed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama from Hammersley Hill, Paxling, New York, on May 10, 1950, in which he stated that he had asked President Truman if America could supply the Tibetan local army with modern weapons and sufficient advisers to instruct the Tibetan soldiers in their proper use."

The author has included in this book the contents of this letter he had seen in the Exhibition of Tibetan Revolution in Lhasa, in the chapter entitled "Imperialist Intrigue in Tibet".

## INSIDE STORY OF **TIBET**



Afro-Asian Writers' Bureau  
1967

# INSIDE STORY OF TIBET



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## PREFACE

The imperialists headed by those of the United States of America have not yet given up interfering in the internal affairs of China. During the People's War of Liberation, the U.S. imperialists backed the Kuomintang reactionaries against the Chinese People's Liberation Army. When the situation became unfavourable to the Kuomintang reactionaries in China, they resorted to all kinds of plots and schemes in an attempt to thwart the complete liberation of the Chinese people. However, by the end of 1949, the entire China with the exception of Tibet and Taiwan was liberated by the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the establishment of the Central People's Government was declared in Peking, on October 1, 1949.

Thereafter, the U.S. imperialists in collusion with the British imperialists and the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet attempted to obstruct the liberation of Tibet region of China and tried to make that region an imperialist colony. This scheme was thwarted by the Central People's Government of China by entering into an agreement with the local government of Tibet, in 1951, for the peaceful liberation of this region. Thereafter, the U.S. imperialists and Indian reactionaries instigated the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet to stage an armed rebellion, in March, 1959, in Tibet, against the Central People's Government of China, with

the aim of bringing this region under their domination. The rebellion was suppressed by the people of Tibet with the assistance of the People's Liberation Army and the defeated imperialist agents who belonged to the upper strata reactionary clique in Tibet, including the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, fled to India. The U.S. imperialists and Indian reactionaries, at present, are making use of these stooges, who are residing in India, in their campaign against China, brazenly interfering in its internal affairs. The reactionary Chiang Kai-shek clique who fled to the Chinese province of Taiwan, after their defeat in the mainland, has also been made use of by the U.S. imperialists for the same purpose, making Taiwan an anti-China war base.

After the liberation of Tibet region, only the province of Taiwan remained to be liberated to complete the liberation of entire China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army and the seven hundred million Chinese people, under the heroic leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, will accomplish this sacred task in the very near future.

The reactionary propaganda machine of the imperialists of the world, continuously, are attempting to mislead and misinform the world people as to what was actually taking place inside Tibet region of China under the cover of so-called Buddhism.

It has become a common practice for the imperialists and all reactionaries of the world to take refuge under the religious sentiments of the people, as the last resort, when all other attempts fail, to protect their vested interests against the advancing tide of the socialist forces of the world. They had used religion

as a camouflage, to the maximum, in case of Tibet, to mislead and deceive those who were not familiar with the true situation that existed inside Tibet region of China before liberation. Even today, they try to make use of the Dalai Lama, the so-called Buddhist leader of Tibet, who fled to India and who is residing there now, as a tool for their vicious propaganda against China and socialism.

In this book, I have endeavoured to relate, in brief, the inside story of Tibet region of China with what I have found and seen with my own eyes during a short stay in Lhasa and travels in Tibet, with my wife, Gloria, in September, 1966. I hope, the material I have found will be of some assistance to the people of the world, specially to the Buddhists, to understand the truth about Tibet and also the true colour of the imperialists and all reactionaries who have taken an undue interest in Tibetan affairs and who still keep harping on Tibetan Buddhism, on world platforms, along with the vicious propaganda they carry out against China and socialism.

Ratne Deshapriya Senanayake

Peking

October 1, 1967

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## JOURNEY THAT NATURE DECIDES

I was highly thrilled when my friend Huang, the Chinese writer told me one fine morning in Peking, that our trip to Tibet was arranged.

"But", he said, "it now depends on a medical check up."

"Why?" I asked.

"Only those who are perfect in health can visit Tibet. It is the roof of the world. Climate is peculiar. If you have high blood pressure you will not come back. There is lack of oxygen in the air in Tibet. You will find it rather difficult to breathe. The city of Lhasa is over 12,000 feet above sea level. The airport is situated at an elevation of over 14,000 feet. It is the highest airport in the world," said Huang.

Although I felt perfect in health, I was a little worried as to what the doctor would finally say. "It now depends on the medical check up", Huang's words were haunting my mind. It was the 6th of September, 1966.

At 2 o'clock, in the afternoon, someone tapped the door of Room 541 Peking Hotel, where my wife Gloria and I were staying. I opened the door to find our interpreter Hua.

"We have to go to the Hospital tomorrow morning, at 10 o'clock. I have got an appointment with the doctor, to get ourselves examined for our trip to Tibet",

said Hua, as he walked into the room.

The following morning, we were accompanied by Hua to the Peking general Hospital. I was feeling quite fit. Nevertheless I was a little jittery as our trip to Tibet depended on what the doctor would say.

"Your pressure is normal" said Doctor Chang, after the check up. "Lungs are all right. As for the heart, a cardiograph will show better."

I was taken to another room where a cardiograph was taken.

The examination was over. I was acquitted honourably as a fit and proper person to be admitted to Tibet, — this wonderful region of China. Gloria was, now, being examined by the doctor. I was anxiously waiting in the room. She was acquitted without even being subjected to a cardiograph examination.

Jubilant, as we were, with the results, we came back to the hotel.

"Although it is summer in Tibet you require winter clothes as it is very cold over there," Huang said.

He had been in Tibet for about a month, exactly a year ago during this period, when the Tibet Autonomous region was established.

With all necessary paraphernalia for this wonderful trip, packed in our suitcases, four of us — Huang, Hua, my wife and I set off by plane from Peking on the morning of September 10, 1966.

Huang was the only all-knowing traveller amongst us, about Tibet. Before we started off from Peking, he said that there was a flight from Chengtu to Lhasa the following morning. At least, that was the schedule announced by Huang, in Peking.

After two stops, at Taiyuan and Sian airports, we reached Chengtu, at dusk.

Chengtu is the capital of Szechuan Province bordering the region of Tibet. From Peking to Chengtu we had, by now, travelled over 1,500 miles.

The representatives of the provincial writers' organization and the government received us at the airport. They said, the plane was ready to take off early the following morning for Lhasa.

We stayed overnight at the airport as it was convenient for us to get ready for the flight early next morning. There were comfortable quarters at the airport for overnight passengers.

The flight to Lhasa was scheduled for 8 o'clock the following morning. We were up early, having in mind the time of the flight. Gloria and I were sipping a cup of tea in our annex when Hua rushed in and requested us to get ready half an hour earlier, saying that the plane was to take off before schedule as the weather was likely to be adverse later in the day.

Hurriedly we packed up. Then an announcement was made to the effect that the time of the flight would be announced later as the weather over the range was turning rather stormy.

We were waiting impatiently, sipping more and more tea, this time green tea.

Arms of the wall clock were fast moving. The time, now, was past eleven in the morning.

At 12 o'clock, Mao, the Director of Civil Aviation at Chengtu came towards us with a broad smile and in a very polite tone announced that that day's flight to Lhasa was cancelled as the weather was very un-



favourable.

Then we entered into a conversation with this amiable Director, about flights to Lhasa.

"The distance from Chengtu to Lhasa airport is about 1,000 miles. It is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours flying. But the weather over the mountain changes rapidly. The plane has got to fly over the high peaks. At times over 35,000 feet above. Storms, sudden gusts of wind and dark clouds obstruct the route. Moreover, landing at the Lhasa airport is very difficult, because of a high mountain range which surrounds the airport. The plane has got to fly over this high range which is over 20,000 feet just bordering the airport and lower immediately to the runway at over 14,000 feet. If this mountain range is covered with clouds, it is dangerous to fly. If it is stormy, the plane will be dashed on the hills. The gusts of wind and storms experienced in this region are so dangerous that no aeroplane is kept at the Lhasa airport overnight. Leave aside overnight, it does not stay over there for more than an hour after landing. So that if the weather stands reasonably clear according to official forecast for at least over five hours at a stretch, only, the plane will take off from Chengtu for Lhasa," explained the Director.

We spent the evening of September 11, 1966, at the Chengtu airport discussing various things, relating stories and playing cards. After a film show organised by the Airport Authorities to keep us in good spirit, we retired to our quarters. Before we went to bed, the authorities requested us to be in readiness to take off early the following morning.

The weather in Chengtu was fine early morning

the following day. The bright red sun was seen slowly emerging from the eastern horizon. Guided or rather misguided by this bright weather around Chengtu, I thought we were definitely flying to Lhasa that day. I was so sure that I even purchased at the airport wine shop a bottle of Maotai and a bottle of wine to be carried to Lhasa. Besides us, about twenty five other passengers, Lhasa bound, were in the waiting hall ready with their bag and baggage to join the flight.

"The latest message from Lhasa says a storm is gathering force over the high mountains. We will have to watch for some time", the control tower at the airport sent the message down.

Gloria pulled out the pack of cards from her handbag and we were playing cards. One Li, a real card sharper from Chengtu air office joined us. Hours passed.

"If the weather report from Lhasa at 12 noon is not favourable, you will not fly today," announced Li while scoring a trick over us on the card table. We continued our game.

"The stormy clouds are roaring above the high mountains. The Lhasa airport is unapproachable. Today's flight is cancelled. Hope the weather will be clear tomorrow," announced the traffic controller.

Disappointed, as we were, we got into a conversation with the Director of Civil Aviation at Chengtu. He related to us his experiences on this air stretch between Chengtu and Lhasa.

"Although the weather around here is fine, we can't take off. Our flight is guided by the weather report we receive from Lhasa. We have a tele-com-

munication system between Chengtu and Lhasa and we get weather reports every hour, throughout the day. Actually, Lhasa controls the traffic on this line. That is how we have avoided disaster. Since the inception of this flight six years ago, we have had no accidents. The only draw back is that we cannot keep to a regular schedule. That is beyond our control. Nature controls it at the moment. We are yet experimenting to control nature over this dangerous range. Guided by Chairman Mao's thought, we will overcome even the natural difficulties in the very near future. From my experience, I can assure you that you can fly to Tibet, but I am only unable to assure you the date," explained the Director.

Hopes of our flying to Lhasa had become so hopeless, by now, that our friends in Chengtu thought of arranging a tour for us in the Chengtu area to while away the time.

Since we had other important engagements in Peking, and the time we expected to spend in Tibet was being gradually limited, we were almost inclined to abandon our trip to Tibet.

## FORCED HOLIDAY IN CHENG TU

We had, now, become unexpected guests of Wu, the Director of the Foreign Affairs Office of Chengtu and Mi, the Mayor of Chengtu. The way they conducted affairs over there gave us the impression that that was not the first time they were playing host to stranded passengers.

"Lunch is ready. Shall we go to the table?" invited Wu, as if the lunch was an item on a scheduled programme prepared by them for us on a pre-arranged visit to Chengtu.

After lunch, our hosts expressed the desire to take us for a drive to see the countryside. We jumped at the idea.

About eight of us got into a station wagon. One crept in with a basket of orange juice and beer.

The drive towards the countryside through acres and acres of unending paddy fields was indeed a very pleasant one.

It was just the harvesting time. Men, women and children singing songs under red banners and portraits of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, in the fields, were collecting golden coloured sheaves of paddy and piling them up in domes. We were told that this province was the granary of China from time immemorial. It reminded me of the rice we ate in Ceylon, as Ceylon imported

200,000 tons of rice from China, every year. It was rice to the left and rice to the right, extending upto the blue mountains far, far away.

Now and then, a flock of ducks, numbering over thousand, crossed the road. Herds of cattle were grazing in the harvested fields. Pigs were running about, in the muddy water holes. The road builders were busy at repair works. Horse carts loaded with grain were finding their way towards the mill. Groups of men and women with baskets full of grain on their shoulders passed by.

This vast extent of fertile plain is put into use throughout the year by an efficient system of irrigation works and rotation of crops.

This rich land was the private property of a few landlords before liberation, each owning thousands of acres. The poor peasants who worked these fields during those miserable days had, sometimes, to die of starvation due to the most cruel form of exploitation practised by these landlords. Only a few grains of rice, which were not at all adequate to feed the families, were doled out to the peasants who cultivated the land and the products, almost in entirety, were taken to the store-houses of the landlords.

The peasants whom we had the opportunity to meet, described the sorrowful life they lived under the landlords during those bad old days. After liberation the peasants had become their own masters.

This fertile granary of China is, today, owned by the liberated peasants who worked the fields in communes and state farms. The harvest returns always exceeded the target now, we were told, since the peasants,

inspired by socialist production programme, in new China, take much interest in their work.

After an hour's drive through pleasant scenery, we came to a rural commune and proceeded to see their fish ponds. These fish ponds are little lakes, covering two to three acres, where various kinds of fish are reared for the market.

We were walking along the bunds of the fish ponds when Wang, an official of the Chengtu foreign office, who was in our company, suggested doing a little fishing. All agreed. Fishing rods and stools to sit on were produced. Everyone seemed to be very happy about the proposal except myself as I was not versed in this sport.

"I would rather sip a glass of beer," I said.

All were seated on the bund in a row holding the fishing rods. Each one was anxiously expecting a fish to help him win a match over the other.

"I caught a fish. I caught a fish!" shouted Huang while gradually winding back the rod string. Others rushed towards Huang to see the size of the fish he was pulling out, some leaving their rods and others still holding them and pulling them across the waters. Huang was winding and winding back the string. After a few minutes of struggling, to everyone's surprise, he fished out a small bundle of straw.

All laughed and warned Huang not to give false alarms and unnecessarily excite others.

This interesting drama was sufficient incitement for me also to join the game.

Suddenly, Wang, who was rather energetic, was seen silently pulling a big weight from the water with his

fishing rod. Others noticed it and moved towards him. He really fished one out, but when he was about to catch it with his hands, it escaped back into the water. It was really a big one of about four or five pounds. Everyone was admiring his efficiency in catching such a big fish and laughing at his weakness in losing it. Of course, Huang had the last laugh.

The veteran fisherman, Wang, continued to catch and lose. Anyway, by dusk, he managed to bag in three big ones. About three or four had escaped, some with the hooks and others with a portion of the string. All others failed even to pull out a straw.

The Director of the commune who was a charming old gentleman from the rural peasantry, extending the traditional Chinese hospitality, presented to us, in addition to what our party was able to fish out, some water-melons from their farm.

It was 8:30 when we reached the airport that night.

Huang was anxious to find out the latest weather report from Lhasa. He rushed to the information room.

"Yet no signs of improvement. A heavy thunderstorm is in progress over Lhasa airport area", said Huang as he came and sat at the dinner table. The additional steaming dish on the table was that of the biggest fish caught by our fisherman, a couple of hours earlier, cooked in full.

Although the information that night from Lhasa was not at all encouraging, the Director of Civil Aviation asked us not to give up hopes. The position, he said, might change the following morning. That night,

too, we went to bed hoping to get to Lhasa the next morning.

By now, it had become a sheer habit every morning to be up early, have tea, dress up for the trip, pack up our bags and wait in anticipation till noon and go somewhere else in the afternoon. 13th of September morning was also spent in this fashion at the airport.

It was announced at 12 noon that the day's flight to Lhasa was cancelled. After lunch, we moved out to the countryside again. This time, to see the doings of a former landlord in this area.

Liu Wen-tsai was a landlord, warlord, area chief and a big opium merchant in Chengtu region before liberation. He had the blessings of the Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang Government in all his misdeeds. His residence which is now a museum attracting people from various parts of the province, stands testimony to the lordly life he had lived. It is a small palace. He had owned the major portion of the land in the locality, running into thousands of acres. He had his private army. He had had six wives, two daughters and three sons. His modes of travel had been the palanquin, horse chariot and motor car. In addition, he had owned hundreds of domestic servants.

He had introduced his own administrative and legal systems and penal codes to govern the poor peasants who were living on his lands. The punishments included whipping, torturing, cutting off limbs, pulling out eyes, blowing and bursting stomachs, putting into underground water cells with iron spikes and spears, suffocating to death and beheading. He had his own

torture chambers. He was the plaintiff as well as the judge in all cases.



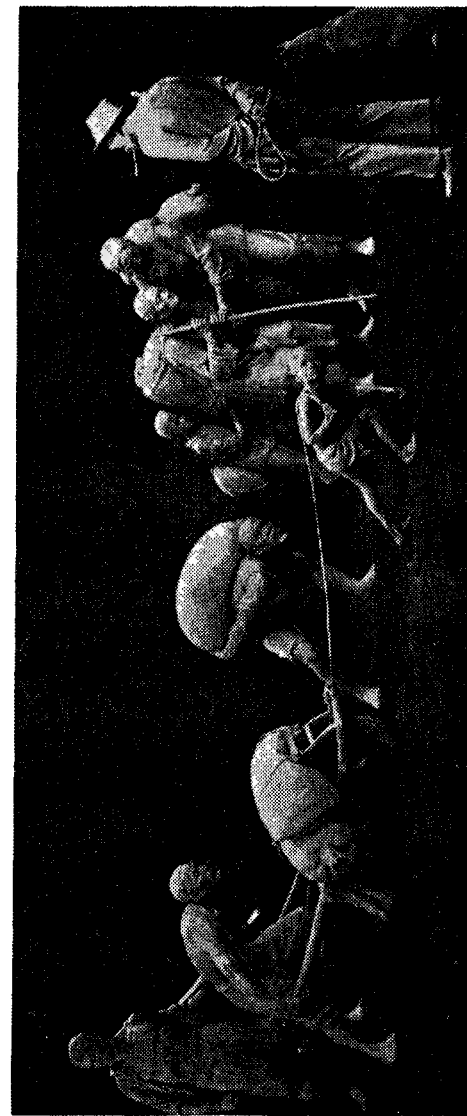
*The children are crying outside the prison bars behind which their mothers are locked up for not being able to pay the taxes due to extreme poverty.*

Thousands of peasants living in and out of his manorial estates were subjected to his own laws and punishments. These peasants had no right, whatsoever, to complain against this cruel landlord. They worked in his fields for a few grains. Eighty per cent of the crop yields were taken by the landlord into his store houses. He had, in this petty kingdom, his own collectors who supervised the grain during the harvesting time and also collected thirty odd other taxes and rates introduced by him to exploit the poor peasants. When the poor peasants had not enough rice to keep the home fires burning, he used to lend rice which he collected with interest at the next harvest from the portion doled out to the peasants. Under this system, the peasants were, for generations, in bondage to Liu Wen-tsai. The collection yard where the rents, dues, debts and grains were collected by this landlord, situated in his residential premises, enclosed by a high wall which also ran round the entire manor, is a place worth seeing.

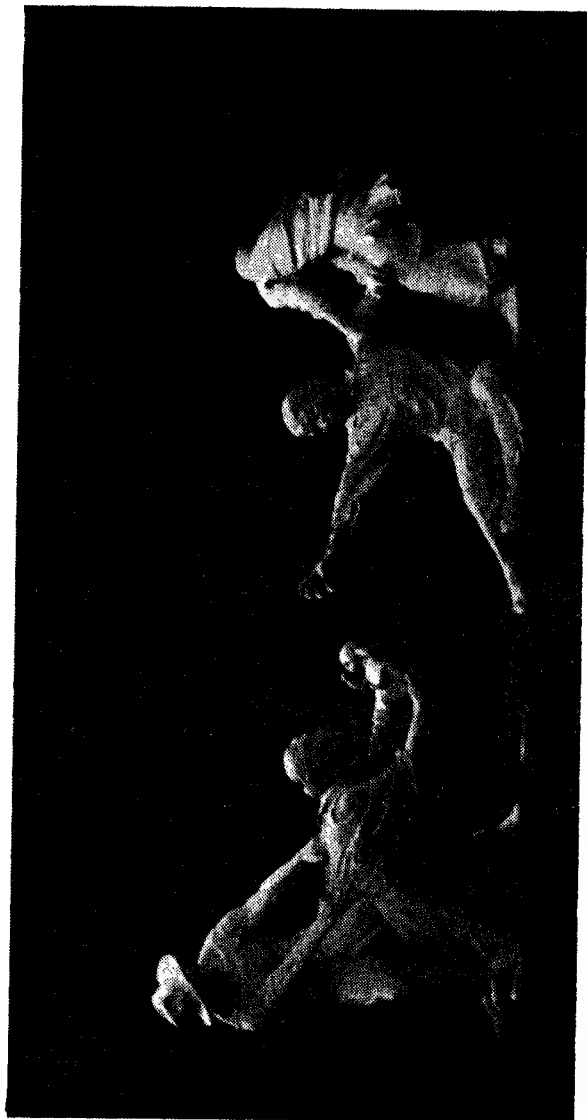
It was here we saw for the first time the type of heartless and cruel exploitation that had been going on before liberation, in China. The sorrowful facial expressions of the helpless peasants' families when their last grain was extracted forcibly from their baskets by Liu Wen-tsai with the assistance of his officials, the lamentation of old and young men, women and children who were being dragged and whipped for not being able to pay the debts of grain in full, the pathetic sight of infants crawling towards the wooden prison bars behind which their mothers were tied to the posts for not being able to pay the taxes, tears of old women dropping down on the heads of young children whose



*A blind old man was forced by a written order to surrender his only grand-daughter who used to lead him in his walks, as a domestic servant to Liu Wen-tsai in payment of a grain debt.*



*It was here we saw for the first time the type of heartless and cruel exploitation that had been going on before liberation, in China.*



*Liu Wen-tsai had also collected breast milk from the young mothers for his personal use to regain the losing vitality due to old age. The officers who were on this job forcibly dragged out of their homes the young mothers and took them to Liu Wen-tsai's residence to extract the breast-milk while the infants were crying for milk at home.*

hands they were holding and moving out of the yard in utter desperation to beg in the streets for a living after surrendering all the grains they possessed and the last hen they had at home in payment of dues and debts, depicted in life size clay sculpture in this yard in their natural form to the very nerve, as they were, really related in silence the woeful tale of the oppressed peasants under this cruel landlord.

In addition to the thirty odd taxes he had collected from the inhabitants of his lands, Liu Wen-tsai had also collected breast milk from the young mothers for his personal use to regain the losing vitality due to old age. The officers who were on this job forcibly dragged out of their homes the young mothers and took them to Liu Wen-tsai's residence to extract the breast milk while the infants were crying for milk at home.

After harvesting, the peasants themselves had to carry the bags of paddy on their backs, walking, sometimes two or three miles, to the collection yard for measuring and apportioning. The whole family of the poor peasants, including their young ones of about seven or eight years old, carried this burden.

Liu Wen-tsai had not only been a big landlord but also a cheat of the first degree. He had had two measures (square boxes) to measure the paddy. One was made smaller than the other by padding up the interior bottom and the difference was not noticeable when both were kept together as outwardly they were similar. When he was lending paddy to the poor peasants, he used the smaller one. When recovering with interest, he used the bigger one. Thus, he had practised a bit of cheating, too, invisibly, in the rush, in addition



*A child is clinging to the leg of his father who was tied up and taken prisoner for not being able to pay grain debts.*

to the visible extortion and exploitation. He had also printed counterfeited currency notes, in plenty, and surreptitiously put into circulation through the poor peasants who came to borrow money from him as well as through his agents in banks and payments made for purchases.

Liu Wen-tsai had never been to a school in his life. He was not able to read and write. He was an uneducated man. But he had been so crafty that he succeeded in amassing considerable wealth through exploitation with the help of his brother who was the Army Commander of the Kuomintang Government of Chiang Kai-shek in this region.

Any visitor to this pre-liberation collection yard of Liu Wen-tsai would be moved enough not only to hate the cruel system of oppression and exploitation under feudalism and capitalism but also to develop additional courage to fight against such system wherever it exists and liberate the suffering masses, leaving no chances for a return to such misery.

Chairman Mao had once said that the Chinese peasants were the most oppressed in the world. To my mind, Liu Wen-tsai's collection yard had been sufficient testimony.

Liu Wen-tsai died in 1948, aged 60, just as the People's Liberation Army was marching into this area. The liberated peasants were only sorry that this cruel despot could not be brought for trial before the people's court for the crimes he had committed.

After visiting Liu Wen-tsai's manor house, we returned to the airport, quite late that night.





*Holding high the red banner of the Communist Party, the peasants seize the guns from the landlords and revolt against cruel exploitation and tyranny.*

14th of September 1966 was a decisive day for us. For, we had decided, finally, the previous night to give up our trip to Tibet in case we could not travel on the 14th morning and, instead, spend a couple of days at Kunming and get back to Peking via Wuhan, spending another day or two in that city.

A fairly heavy shower over the Chengtu area greeted us in the morning as we got up. The sky was heavy and cloudy. The rain continued without any sign of ceasing. Gloria and I were studying the tourist map, after the morning cup of tea, to locate the cities we were to visit abandoning the trip to Lhasa when, to our great surprise, the Director of Civil Aviation, Mao put up his appearance with our interpreter Hua and Huang and asked us to get ready quickly to fly to Lhasa.

The time was 7:30 in the morning. "Will the plane take off in this horrible weather?" I inquired.

"I do not want to disappoint you. I will somehow or other see to it that you visit Lhasa today and also that you will be back in time for the October 1st National Day celebrations in Peking," promised Director Mao, adding, "another distinguished visitor waited here, at this airport, last month for 6 days hoping to fly to Lhasa and ultimately abandoned the trip and went back, you know."

Director Mao gave this bold undertaking as he had received the latest report an hour ago from Lhasa airport with the good news that the sky was very bright over there and according to the official calculations weather would continue to be fine for some time.

"Rain over here is not our problem. We can take

off. Our problem is the other end. It is 1,000 miles away on the hills. The problem is whether we could land there after  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours flying. I can rely on the latest weather report. You will be safe. Don't worry." said Director Mao as he walked out in a hurry to attend to our send-off.

Gleaming with joy, we packed our bags in a few minutes and were ready to board the plane.

The heavy plane, 212, with a capacity for 66 passengers which was immovable property for the past 4 days, grounded just in front of us on the airfield, warmed up its engines with the regular hum.

"Tsai tsiang, Tsai tsiang", our hosts wished us, joyfully, as we were stepping up the ladder to the cabin, waving our hands in appreciation.

Sharp at 8:20 in the morning the giant plane roared up into the sky, dashing through the rain and clouds, taking us to our long-awaited destination.

## ARRIVAL IN LHASA

"Don't walk fast. Don't exert yourselves" advised the doctor who had come with Namji, the Mayor of Lhasa and his wife, Yang, the Director of the Foreign Affairs Office and some other friends to welcome us to Tibet as we disembarked at the Lhasa airport.

These gentlemen had come to the airport from Lhasa city, motoring 125 miles along rather difficult roads, four days ago, expecting the originally scheduled flight which we were to take from Chengtu. From that time onwards, they were there, counting the days, till the plane arrived. As much as we were forced into an unexpected holiday on the Chengtu side, so were they, on the other side, by the unpredictable Tibetan weather.

The temperature at the airport was just  $6^{\circ}$  F above freezing point. We were at the highest airport in the world. The runway was at an elevation of 14,975 feet above sea level. The time was 11 o'clock in the morning and the bright sun in the clear blue sky above was shining, darting its silvery rays across the thin air towards the snowcapped mountain range which stood like a high wall right round the airport adding enchantment to this scenic beauty which indeed resembled a fairyland.

"If you find it difficult to breathe, please let me know" said the doctor.

"Why", I inquired.



*The Mayor of Lhasa, Namji (left end) and his wife (right end) received us at the Lhasa airport on our arrival.*

“Cylinders of oxygen are with me”, replied the doctor.

As the air at this elevation was very thin due to

lack of oxygen, the doctor had arranged to help us in case we found it difficult to breathe. He had had the experience of assisting some visitors on earlier occasions who had fainted a few minutes after landing. We were further advised to preserve the oxygen we had in our lungs by not talking too much.

It was indeed a beautiful sight to see how herds and herds of grazing yak, sheep and horses on this high plateau were running hither and thither excited by the roaring noise of the engines as the plane lowered down towards the Lhasa runway.

Piloting a plane in high altitude and rough weather is no easy task. Piloting it through a narrow gorge squeezed in by high mountains on either side is still more difficult. Piloting from 32,000 feet down to 15,000 in a few minutes without touching the immediate range of peaks and bringing it to a halt on a short runway between the hills is the most difficult. The Chinese pilots are doing it. They are really wonderful, and accurate to the last minute and to the fathom.

This is the most thrilling experience we have had in air travel up to now.

The two and a half hour flight from Chengtu to Lhasa was really exciting. The plane which took off at 8:20 in the morning from Chengtu during heavy rain pierced through the thick blanket of dark clouds in a couple of minutes just like a wet bird darting off in search of bright sunshine, and emerged into the clear blue sky above the clouds.

I was looking out through the window. For one hour it was nothing but a layer of thick cloud below us, now and then, touching the belly of the plane and

at times stretching out its arms to embrace the whole plane. Above us, it was clear blue sky.

To the left, far away, the snowcapped Kongkala peak, 26,000 feet high, was protruding towards the sky through the thick layer of clouds like a cone of ice glittering in the bright sun.

Now, we were flying at 32,000 feet and at a speed of 400 miles per hour. The clouds gradually became thinner and thinner and we could see the snow-covered pointed cliffs below us like shining swords raised upwards as if in defence of this marvellous range. The rivers flowed down in various directions like silvery tapes zigzagging their way through to avoid the hard and high rocks. The small lakes on the high mountain were frozen and the rays of the shining sun dashed on them and reflected upwards. The roadway to Lhasa was visible, now and then, like a thin brown ribbon meandering across the high mountains, plateau and valleys, disappearing into the forest-clad hills.

About twenty minutes before landing, we suddenly noticed Huang getting up from his seat and pulling out some woollen clothes from his suitcase. While covering his already well padded body with another layer of woollens, he warned us to be ready for a severe beating by the cold in Lhasa.

"Madam, your saree is not at all sufficient to protect yourself from the cold when you get down. Better wear slacks and a woollen jacket", Huang advised Gloria and ordered us to cover ourselves properly with more woollens as he did, before landing in Lhasa.

As we stepped out of the plane, our hosts received us on the tarmac. The motor cars were brought up to

the runway and the motorcade started off almost immediately for the city of Lhasa.

The cars in which we were travelling were equipped with oxygen cylinders.

Now, we were motoring down the Tibetan plateau through narrow stretches of grasslands that lay in between the mountains. Grazing yak, sheep and horses and dwellings of herdsmen in little groups, here and there, were a common sight. Shepherd boys on horse back were driving the herds of sheep, now and then, towards the greenery.

After about an hour's drive our interpreter Hua who was in our car suddenly complained that he was feeling sick. We stopped the vehicle. Others in the motorcade stopped behind us. The doctor who was travelling in one of the vehicles in the rear, rushed to our car to find out what had happened. Noticing that Hua was fainting, he immediately helped him with oxygen and after a while he recovered.

Since we had got down from our vehicle there, we thought of looking around to see how those herdsmen lived in that high plateau in the piercing cold.

Their houses, built with mud and stone, were very low and flat-roofed in keeping with the climatic conditions, and were in settlement groups enclosed by piled up stone walls of about four or five feet in height. These walls were to protect the dwellings from the gusts of wind that blew across the plain very often.

A group of women and children came out of one of those dwellings towards the road where our cars were stopped. They were dressed in very heavy, thick woollen clothes. The women had applied some kind of

thick oil on their cheeks as a protection from the piercing cold and wind. We took some pictures of them and had a friendly chat. We had only a few cigarettes to offer them as a token of friendship.



*On our way from the airport to the city of Lhasa, we stopped to see the life of herdsmen in the pastures 15,000 feet above sea level.*

That plain was about 15,000 feet above sea level and lay like a long cradle among the snow-covered ridges on either side.

After a while, we started off. It was a new road, not yet macadamized. The surface was dry and dusty. It ran through valleys, slopes, hillocks, dried up riverbeds and shallow streams. Groups of road builders were busy, here and there, improving the roadway.

We had driven half the distance between the airport and Lhasa city when we came down to a petrol filling station at 13,500 feet above sea level where all vehicles passing through this way invariably drew in for re-filling and an engine check-up. The authorities at this stop received us cordially and invited us for tea in a small reception room.

This petrol station situated on the flattened ridge of a mountain, capable of accommodating about fifty vehicles at a time, was crowded with lorries, trucks and jeeps driving in for refilling and moving out. The ridge sloped down deep below from the road to a stream that tossed over the bed-rock throwing up the waters' silvery spray.

After about thirty minutes' rest and a refreshing cup of green tea, we started the journey again.

As we were going further down to a lower elevation, we sighted the rye and wheat fields on either side of the road. Groups of Tibetan farmers, men and women, were harvesting the fields singing their traditional songs while others were cooking the meals for them nearby, out in the open air. There was bright sunshine.

Coming closer to Lhasa, the road ran along the bank of a river that flowed down towards the city. On

either side of the river were the fertile fields and vegetable gardens.

It was about 4 o'clock, in the afternoon, when we reached Lhasa, after motoring 125 miles from the airport. It took about 4 hours for us to reach the city.

## SERFDOM TO FREEDOM

The majestic sight that attracted our attention, at once, as we approached Lhasa the previous evening, was the world famous Pota-la (Buddha hill) Palace, the centuries old residence of Dalai Lama, standing on the summit of a hill that rose up in the city valley, with its golden pinnacles above maroon-coloured upper walls shining brightly in the setting sun.

Our vehicles were driven into a compound, bordered with beautiful flower beds, at the foot of Pota-la hill where the newly constructed government guest house stood with two storeys on the residential side and three on the administrative.

An upstairs apartment of this modern guest house was our place of residence during our stay in this historic city on the hills of China's hidden and mystic region for thousands of years.

Climbing the stairs to the upper storey was not an easy task. We had not yet fully recovered from the affect of the mysterious weather. The difficulty to breathe was still our main complaint. The doctor who was in attendance advised us to count the steps upward very slowly. We went up halfway about ten or twelve steps and stopped for a while to rest. After a couple of minutes we started the slow climb again and reached our apartment. All of us were completely exhausted.

This apartment was in very beautiful surroundings.



*The city of Lhasa with the Pota-la Palace in the background.*

Through the window of the passage adjoining our bed room, we could see the glittering golden pinnacles of the Pota-la Palace. The snow-capped mountain range at a distance, in the background, resembled a silvery setting. From the balcony on the other side, the modernized sector of the Lhasa city, with the macadamized main street full of traffic and shopping crowds, could be seen.

This guest house was one of those modern buildings constructed in Lhasa, a year ago, to celebrate the founding of the autonomous region of Tibet.

Prior to that the city of Lhasa had not seen modern amenities like pipe-borne water service, electricity and drainage.

The old sector of the city was still in that primitive condition with muddy and dusty roads and cross roads running in between lines of old styled flat roofed mud and stone houses, residential as well as commercial.

Passenger buses were plying up and down the city carrying loads to and from distant districts. The inhabitants of this mysterious and wonderful region of China, on the roof of the world, untouched by the modern civilization for generations, had seen the omnibus for the first time just prior to the celebrations of the founding of the autonomous region of Tibet a year ago.

The modern auto was gradually replacing the donkey, horse and the yak, the traditional modes of transport of the Tibetan people from time immemorial, in the city as well as in the countryside.

Woollen clad liberated serfs, who hadn't the where-withal a couple of years ago to step into a shop, were finding their way into the huge departmental store, just

in front of the guest house, to purchase their daily requirements.

Huge portraits of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and long red banners with slogans painted on them, were seen above the news-stands and prominent buildings in the city.

From the balcony of our apartment, we were watching how the evening slowly passed into the darkness of the night, after 8 o'clock, leaving the few glittering electric lights along the roadway to watch over the calmness of the city.

The peculiar weather in Lhasa was still unkind to us. All were complaining of headache and discomfort. The doctor who was resident downstairs of this building examined us. He diagnosed our trouble at once and prescribed some pills to be taken before going to bed.

As patients we retired to bed that night. The floor of the room was so cold that it pierced through the carpet and we could not stand on it wearing even the woollen socks. From the bed, we had to get into the shoes straight away without touching the floor.

The doctor was very efficient and his medicine was very effective. The following morning we were fit to follow the programme arranged for us to see Tibet.

Fifteenth of September 1966, was a memorable day. The rising red sun in the eastern horizon was darting its bright rays through the snow-capped cliffs into the Lhasa valley. The air was fresh and cool.

After breakfast, we walked down the stairway and took a stroll towards the main street.

The rhythmical beat of drums and synchronized sound of gongs drew our attention towards the southern

direction of the street. It was, indeed, an exciting scene. Massive columns of Tibetan workers, peasants and soldiers, raising high the long red banners and the portrait of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, were marching along the highway, shouting thunderous slogans in Tibetan language, "Long live Chairman Mao", "Long live the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution". We stood, where we were, gazing at that inspired demonstration, as it passed by, in front of us, towards the other end of the city.

Tibetan men and women, old and young, dressed in their traditional bulky layers of rough and thick garments, displayed a very militant spirit as they marched. These were a few hundreds out of the million serfs who stood up against slavery and serfdom, cruel oppression and atrocious suppression, eight years ago, in Tibet. These were the heroes of the Tibetan revolution who overthrew the tyrannical rule of the feudal lords and serf-owners, that was there, uninterrupted, for over thousand years. These were the heroes of Tibet who fought their way through, from serfdom to freedom.

They were, now, marching against the remnants of feudalism, to wipe out the old feudal customs and habits that kept the people in bondage from time immemorial. They were now marching to build a new life in a new society. They were now marching with firm determination to build a socialist Tibet and keep pace with other regions of the great motherland of China. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had spread to Lhasa, uprooting in its tide, the poisonous weeds of the old society and touched the roof of the world.





*We stood, where we were, gazing at that inspired demonstration, as it passed by, in front of us, towards the other end of the city.*

## TIBETAN REVOLUTION (I)

It is rather a laborious task to enlighten the people in a region submerged in undisturbed superstition and ignorance for thousands of years where serfdom had been the way of life. The Tibet region was the most backward area in China before liberation—politically, economically and socially.

An examination of the way of life that existed in Tibet before liberation will be of great help to understand the complex nature of the problem handled by the cultural revolutionary committee of Tibet.

Politically, the Dalai Lama, the head of the Buddhist Lamas in Tibet was the head of the local administration. The Dalai Lama was appointed political head of Tibet, for the first time, by the Central Government of China during the reign of Emperor Kang Hsi (1662-1722). Then, it was the fifth Dalai Lama. Dalai Lamas appeared from time to time through re-incarnations according to the belief of the Tibetan Buddhists, and they were selected in accordance with a traditional practice, from time to time, from among the newly born children, within a reasonable period, after the death of the old Dalai Lama. The selection had always been from a top noble family.

The Central Government of China, during the reign of Emperor Chien Lung (1736-1795) authorized a local government institution named Kasha, for the adminis-

tration of Tibet region. At that time the Seventh Dalai Lama was the head of Tibet. Kasha was a council of ministers with the Dalai Lama as its head. The ministers were selected and appointed in the name of the Dalai Lama from among twenty or thirty top feudal families of Tibet. These ministers were called Kaloons. There were six Kaloons in the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Cabinet in 1951, at the time of signing the agreement with the Central Government of China, for the peaceful liberation of Tibet.

The broad masses of the people of Tibet had no voice at all in the administration. There were no elected representatives of the people in the administration. The masses of the people had no political rights at all. The Dalai Lama with the assistance of the six Kaloons exercised legislative, executive and judicial functions over the whole region of Tibet. Although the position *de jure* was this, the council of Kaloons *de facto* handled only the affairs of the upper class and allowed the feudal lords directly to exercise these functions over the inhabitants in their respective manorial estates. So much so, that every manorial estate and every monastery, in addition to its own rules and regulations, had its own jail, whips, torture implements and other methods of punishment. The Kasha had its own officials. Every government post was filled by two persons, one clerical and one lay. Of the two, the clerical officer had precedence. The decrees of the Kasha had no legal validity until they were stamped with the seal of the Dalai Lama.

Economically, Tibet was the most undeveloped region in China. It covers an area of approximately

800,000 square miles. The land in Tibet was owned in entirety by three groups of feudal lords, namely, the local government of Tibet-Kasha, the monastery and the nobility. The Kasha owned 38 per cent of the land. The monasteries owned 37 per cent. The noble families owned 25 per cent. The broad masses of the people had no land at all.

The whole economy was based on agriculture and livestock. The primitive form of agriculture did not bring in sufficient yields. The livestock was limited to the grazing herds in the pastures and grasslands. Apart from a few handicrafts, no industry to speak of existed. The ownership of the herds in the pastures and grasslands and the means of production of the few handicrafts also lay in the hands of the above named three groups of feudal lords.

Socially, Tibet was the most backward among all regions of China. The population of Tibet, in 1951, was 1,200,000. At the time of our visit, in September 1966, it was 1,300,000.

The Tibetan society, before liberation, could be divided into two main classes, namely, the feudal lords and the serfs.

The feudal lords in turn could be divided into three main groups, namely, the local government—Kasha, the monastery and the nobility.

Of the 1.2 million population, about three hundred families belonged to the nobility. These family members and their immediate agents, managers of estates, overseers, their private armies, guards and those officials of the Kasha constituted five per cent of the whole population.

Fifteen per cent of the population, i.e., 180,000, were lamas belonging to various monasteries scattered throughout Tibet. This number had increased, at times, even to 200,000. There had been 2,711 monasteries in Tibet. The biggest monastery in Tibet named 'Daipung' had nine to ten thousand lamas. It had over seven hundred subsidiary monasteries scattered all over Tibet.

Sixty per cent of the population, i.e. 720,000, were peasants. Twenty per cent, i.e. 240,000 were herdsmen. The peasants and herdsmen and the lower lamas who were drawn from these families and attached to various monasteries for free labour, were all in the serf class which constituted over ninety per cent of the entire population. About ten per cent of the peasants and herdsmen were actual slaves handled as chattel.

Small traders and handicraftsmen were serfs who worked for their lords or paid a tax to them for permission to engage in such trade. The big merchants who enjoyed the right of big business, including foreign trade, belonged to the nobility including upper class lamas in monasteries who came from noble families. The land owned by the Kasha was given out to officials or nobles for management.

The serfs could be divided mainly into three types, namely, the *Chapas*, the *Tuichiung* and the *Langsheng*.

The *Chapas* were those peasants who belonged to the feudal estate and were resident within the estate and did compulsory labour for the landowner who, in return, gave them the right to cultivate a small portion of the same land for their personal use. They were also

called upon to do compulsory labour for the local government—Kasha, whenever required. They were listed as part of the estate in all land deeds for generations. They comprised about 45 per cent of the serfs in Tibet.

The *Tuichiungs* were those who were considered as low cast serfs. They were either bankrupt or impoverished *Chapas* who had run away from the original feudal estates and come under new masters. The lamas who were expelled or who had run away from monasteries also fell into this category. They cultivated the land of the new master and obtained a portion of the produce for services rendered. If the former master found them he could take them back or charge a poll tax and allow them to stay at the new place. Those who were found by the old master and who, by agreement, paid the poll tax and stayed under the new master were called *Yenhohu* among the *Tuichiung*. *Yenhohu* had no fixed compulsory service on the new estate but performed about 10 days *yenho* service every year for the land owner. The rest of the time they could work as hired labourers. They had partial freedom for they could move about freely provided they paid the corvee tax. *Tuichiungs* also accounted for about 45 per cent of the serfs. Every person in Tibet had to have a master to avoid being treated as an outlaw.

The *Langshengs* were domestic servants and field labourers who worked for the feudal lords all their lives without pay. They were given little food at the mercy of the master. Their children did not belong to the parents but to the master. When the children

grew up they had to serve the master as their parents did. They were almost slaves who were sold or given as presents or dowry by the master at his will. They lived in the out houses, store rooms or stables. The *Langshengs* constituted about 10 per cent of the serfs in Tibet.

Similar arrangements were also in practice with regard to the serfs who were looking after the livestock. Some of these herdsmen could get a proportionate number of new borns in the herd by agreement with the master, for services rendered in looking after the herds.

When the *Chapas* and *Tuichiungs* fell into heavy debt and could not pay back, the master took over their homes, mules, chicken and the like in recovery and made them *Langshengs*.

All these categories of serfs had no independent way of life. They were, at all times, subject to their master's will. When the feudal lords transferred their estates to any other, the serfs were also transferred to the new owner together with the cattle and farm implements. The serfs could not leave the feudal estate without the permission of the master even for a short absence. If they ran away they were fined heavily and punished cruelly once they were caught. Fetters for the feet, leather whips, beating leather belts and rifles were among the instruments for torture used to subdue the serfs of the feudal estates. The lives of the serfs were entirely at the mercy of their owners and agents. They could whip and flog, hack their noses and limbs, gouge out their eyes and even put them to death by slow torture.

The children of the serfs, as soon as they were

born, were registered in a book and listed as future serfs.

The serfs were not allowed to remain seated in front of the nobility. Their style of dress was also prescribed. They could not marry without the permission of the master. They could not inter-marry with the members of the nobility. The master could degrade or upgrade a serf according to his wish.

Whether on the farms or in the pastures, serfs led miserable lives. Their conditions were the same even in the estates owned by the monasteries headed by the Dalai Lama. Some feudal estates had serfs as many as ten thousand. The land owned by the Kasha was called the *Cha Kang* Land. The serfs in *Cha Kang* Land had to offer certain services as well as pay certain rents to the Kasha in addition to farm work. The transport service which was known as *wula* was one of the main services. It involved transporting all goods and persons indicated in a certificate issued by the Kasha, from one place to another, using their own draught animals, free of charge. The maximum *wula* service that a family had to perform, within a year, was the equivalent of work that could be done by 500 persons and 400 animals in a day and the minimum was equivalent to that of 200 persons and 100 animals a day. The construction work allotted to them by the Kasha was another service they had to render without pay. They had also to provide food, lodging and transport for travelling officials, messengers and army personnel of the Kasha. They had to supply the Kasha with its requirements such as butter, barley, firewood, fodder and paper.

There was another service under the Kasha known as *makang* land service. *Makang* lands were lands connected to military service. The serfs who cultivated the *makang* land had to send a certain number of their family members to serve in the army and supply part of the food and clothing they needed.

In the feudal estates, too, the serfs had to perform similar services to their masters. The feudal estate was mainly divided into two parts. The owners retained about 70 per cent of the land which was the most fertile area of the estate for their direct management and allotted to the serfs the remaining less fertile 30 per cent. The area kept under the direct management of the owner had to be cultivated by these serfs without any compensation. Any serf who had a family of four or got an allotment of about 10 ko (one ko is about one sixth of an acre) had to send a member of his family to work for his feudal lord all the year round without any pay. In addition to the free service in the farm land, these serfs had to cut grass, thresh and mill barley, engage in domestic work, house building, carrying grain and other odd jobs without pay.

There was also in force a corvee tax which all serfs above the age of eighteen and below sixty had to pay. The corvee tax differed according to different areas as well as to the physical prowess and technical skill of the serf. This tax, normally ranged from two to ten taels of silver a year (one tael is about five cents). In some cases it had been as high as one hundred and fifty taels a year.

The Kasha, nobility and the monastery were all

engaged in money lending. The serfs attached to the estates owned by these three types of feudal land owners could obtain loans from their respective masters. The Kasha had charged ten per cent interest on all loans. The nobility and the monastery had charged interest ranging from sixteen to twenty per cent. Eighty to ninety per cent of the serfs in Tibet were in debt before liberation. Owing to the high and compound interest, the serfs were often unable to pay back the loans. In some cases, the debts of the serfs had risen to about two hundred and fifty tons of grain. There had been cases where debts had remained unsettled for over one hundred years and carried over to the next generation.

There was no public education in Tibet. Neither was there any health service. The modern science and technology were completely unknown. There had been one English school run by the British imperialists in the Tibetan town called Gyantse, very close to the Bhutan border. The British imperialists had acquired some privileges in Tibet from the Ching Court of Peking, in 1904, after launching an attack on Lhasa. Among those privileges was a concession to set up a trade centre in Gyantse. They had set up not only the trade centre but also a military camp and, later, this English school. A handful of Tibetan students belonging to the top strata of the nobility, residing around Gyantse, have had access to this school. The British imperialists had trained them to be their agents in Tibet in all matters political, economical and social. Some of them who also have had training in the British military camp there, had taken an active part

in the 1959 rebellion in Tibet against the Central Government of China.

Apart from this school, there were no public schools anywhere else in Tibet. A few families of the upper strata nobility in Lhasa had private tutors. In the monasteries only those upper class lamas who came from the noble families could read and write. The education in the monasteries, enjoyed by the privileged few upper class lamas, was also limited to the study of the Buddhist scriptures. The lamas who belonged to the poorer class or who were drawn from the serf families to the monasteries for free labour, were denied even this privilege of learning to read the scriptures.

The religious practices under the name of Buddhism that existed in Tibet are quite alien to us in Ceylon. The term 'Buddhism' is a misnomer in relation to the religion that existed in Tibet. It is more appropriate to call it Lamaism. The devilish practices of the primitive tribes intertwined with nominal Buddhism has produced Lamaism.

This was the way of life in Tibet on May 23, 1951, when the local government of Tibet-Kasha, headed by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, signed an agreement with the Central Government of China for the peaceful liberation of Tibet and pave the way for socialism in this region.

## TIBETAN REVOLUTION (II)

The agreement signed by the local government of Tibet-Kasha and the Central Government of China for the peaceful liberation of Tibet contained 17 articles. The main stipulation underlying the whole agreement was carrying out social reforms in Tibet through the existing local authority in that region. Thus, the Kasha, headed by the Dalai Lama, agreed to move towards reformation of serfdom as the first step towards social reforms. This, they agreed to do according to their own programme, method and speed.

Kasha also recognized, under this agreement, inter-alia, the People's Liberation Army of China as the national army and agreed to incorporate the Tibetan army into the People's Liberation Army and actively help the People's Liberation Army units to enter Tibet and be stationed in Tibet to strengthen national defence and territorial sovereignty of the motherland of China.

The Central Government of China, under the agreement, recognized regional national autonomy of Tibet under the leadership of the Central Government and in accordance with the policy laid down in the common programme for achieving socialism. This agreement did not disturb the then existing political structure or powers of the Dalai Lama and the Kasha in Tibet. Neither was there any compulsion for reform.

The question of democratic reforms in Tibet was

put off for a later date in order to give the Kasha and the members of the upper strata nobility ample time for consideration, in the light of the actual situation and conditions that existed in various fields.

It was expected that democratic reforms be carried out in a peaceful way through democratic negotiations between the members of the upper strata nobility and the broad masses of the people.

In the agreement, religious beliefs and sentiments of the Tibetan people were given fullest consideration in accordance with the basic policy of the Central Government with regard to religious beliefs.

Although the Central Government of China honoured this agreement strictly, the events that followed stood testimony to the utter disregard shown by the Kasha towards this agreement. Years passed. The serfdom in Tibet went on unchanged. Officials of all levels, ecclesiastical and secular, remained in their original posts. There was no visible social reform even attempted by the Kasha in Tibet.

Meanwhile, the Central Government of China brought about many improvements to assist the social and economic development of Tibet. Three great highways were built between 1954 and 1957 which connected Tibet with other regions of China through Szechuan, Chinghai and Sinkiang, thus, providing easy transport for Tibet which contributed to reduce, almost by half, the prices of consumer goods such as textiles, tea, sugar, tobacco and agricultural implements for the peasantry. A large number of Tibetans got employment in the road construction works with good pay which they had never received before. Formerly, for such work,

unpaid forced labour was used in Tibet. The Central Government also helped the local government of Tibet with electric power plants for Lhasa and Shigatse, new hospitals, schools, experimental farms, seed loans without interest to peasants, gift of farm tools etc.

State-run commercial establishments were set up to purchase the produce of the Tibetan people at high prices and supply them with their necessities at low prices. Later on, the investigations had revealed that some aid given by the Central Government to the peasants of Tibet through the local government had actually not passed on to the peasants. Some nobles were storing the new seed grain in their store houses and giving the peasants very old grain taken from the bottom of their former stocks. Large stocks of agricultural implements gifted by the Central Government to the peasants had passed in to the private store houses of the nobles. The peasants had not received them.

Thus, the economic and social reforms were obstructed and delayed by the serf owning nobles acting through the local government—Kasha.

In 1955, the National People's Congress of China, in response to a Tibetan request, attached a bordering province called Sikang to Tibet. But the people of that province objected to be ruled by the Kasha of Tibet. Therefore, some arrangement had to be made to give the people of this province representation in the local administration. To consider this question and make necessary administrative adjustments, a committee was set up in 1956 with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama as chairman. This committee was called the "Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region". The

Tenth Panchen Lama was the first vice-chairman and a chief high lama from the new province, Sikang, was the second vice-chairman of this committee. Fifty five other members representing all areas in Tibet were included in the committee. A new building was erected in Lhasa for the use of the preparatory committee.

Although Kasha consented to this committee, in practice, they did everything possible to sabotage the work of the preparatory committee. Therefore the work of the preparatory committee came to a standstill.

The Kasha and the ruling upper strata of the nobility, instigated by foreign imperialist powers and Chiang Kai-shek gang with whom they had close contact for years through India, developed this hostility towards reforms to an open rebellion in Tibet, in March 1959, against the Central Government of China, with the intention of severing Tibet from the mainland of China and proclaiming "independence".

Four of the six Kaloons of the Kasha led this rebellion. The other two patriotic Kaloons who wanted the Kasha to honour the agreement for social reforms opposed the rebellion. Majority of the noble families and monasteries joined the rebel forces.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama became a virtual prisoner in the hands of the scheming reactionary rebel clique of the nobility. They abducted the Dalai Lama from his Summer Palace at Norbu Lingka, in Lhasa, to the area called Loka in southern Tibet, bordering India, before they launched armed attacks on the People's Liberation Army garrison in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama was taken by the rebel groups from Loka to Musoorie in North India, crossing the Indo-Tibet border on 29,

March 1959. Thereafter, many of the rebels fled to India taking with them their relatives, servants and movable property including gold.

The commanding centre of the rebellion was Kalimpong, the Indian border town, where some elements belonging to the reactionary upper strata of Tibetan nobility who had fled from Lhasa in 1951, were operating with the assistance of the imperialist powers and Indian reactionary circles.

With the aid of the patriotic Tibetan lamas and laymen, the People's Liberation Army put down the rebellion in the city of Lhasa in less than three days and in other areas within a few weeks.

As the majority of the Kaloons and officials of the Kasha led the rebellion, the Central Government of China, in a proclamation dated March 28th, 1959, dissolved the Kasha and its functions and powers were entrusted to the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region which was set up in 1956. The proclamation announced, inter-alia, that during the time when the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Dantzen-Jaltso, chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, was held under duress, the Tenth Panchen Erdeni Chuji-Geltseng, vice-chairman of the preparatory committee should act as chairman.

On April 8, 1959, the Tenth Panchen Lama, on the invitation of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, formally assumed office as acting chairman. The two patriotic Kaloons who opposed the rebellion were among the members of this Preparatory Committee. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama as chairman



of the Preparatory Committee remained titular head of Tibet even in the absence.



*In front of the Pota-la Palace Tibetan people accuse the rebels of their atrocities.*

## DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

The suppression of the rebellion and the dissolution of the former reactionary local government — Kasha in Tibet cleared the way for democratic reforms sooner than expected.

The Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region which formally assumed authority on April 8, 1959, met in session on June 28, 1959, under the chairmanship of the Tenth Panchen Lama to consider the introduction of the democratic reforms in Tibet. Six hundred people belonging to all sections of social strata, from all parts of Tibet, attended the session as observers. Among them were one hundred serfs sent by the new peasant associations, formed after the suppression of the rebellion, who had the opportunity for the first time in Tibet's long history to sit together with the nobles in the same hall. After three weeks of discussions the session passed decrees to carry out democratic reforms in two stages.

The first stage was the cleaning up of the remnants of rebel groups who had run away to remote areas and abolition of forced labour and personal servitude.

The second stage was the reduction of exorbitant crop share taken by the land owners and high interest charged on loans to the serfs. Thereafter distribution of land to the tiller.

The peasant associations, under the supervision of

the military control commissions set up in various areas, were to enforce these new decrees.

The first military control commission was set up in Lhasa on March 23, 1959, immediately after the suppression of the rebellion. Similar commissions were set up, in succession, in other areas except the area called Tsang with its capital at Shigatse which was under the Tenth Panchen Lama. Since the Tenth Panchen Lama co-operated with the programme of democratic reforms, no military control commission was needed there.

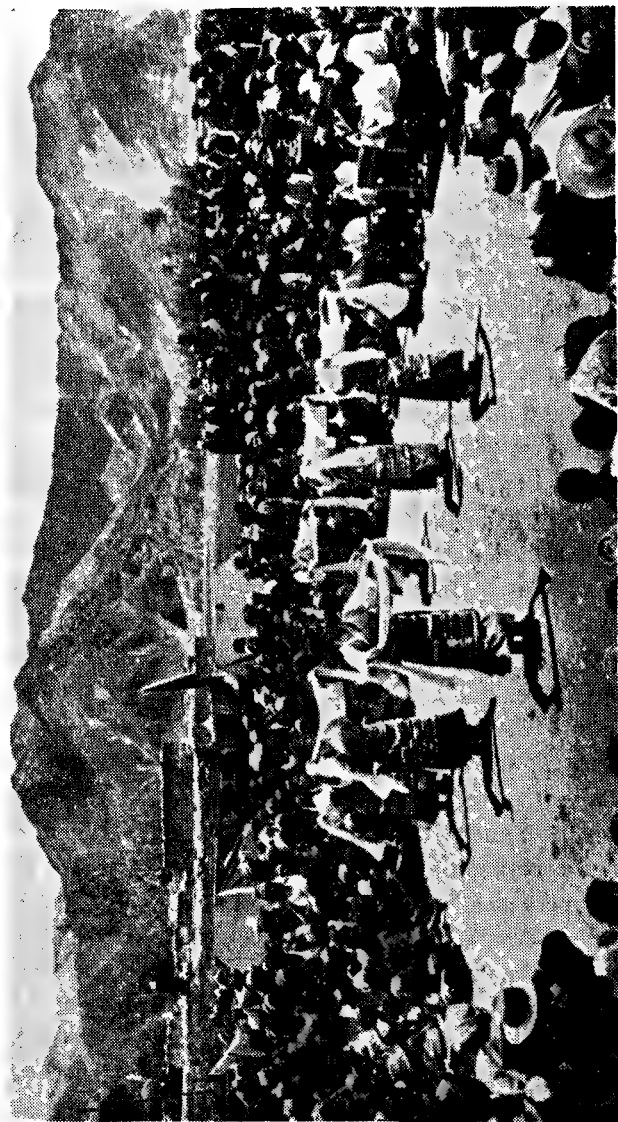
The military control commissions were composed of the representatives of the People's Liberation Army and the representatives of the local patriotic people. The autonomy and the military control were simultaneously in force till law and order was completely restored and the first stage of the democratic reforms was completed. Thereafter, the people's elected representatives took over complete autonomy through the administrative organs set up throughout Tibet at all levels.

The clearing up campaign was conducted on the basis of punishing those rebels who had been guilty of major crimes and winning over those who were intimidated into joining the rebellion and rewarding those who performed meritorious services. The People's Liberation Army units in Tibet played an active role in building up a broad united front of all strata of patriotic people who had not taken part in the rebellion. They undertook to protect the lives and property of the peasants and herdsmen and also the industrial, business, political and religious circles in Tibet. They respected the habits, customs and religious beliefs of

the Tibetan local people. They protected the lamaseries, cultural institutions and relics. They safeguarded the interests of the broad masses of the people. On instructions of the Central Government, the People's Liberation Army did not take retaliatory action against the rebel elements, to injure or humiliate them, when they were taken prisoners or when they had laid down their arms.

The abolition of forced labour and personal servitude was announced all over Tibet, together with other democratic reforms, through public meetings of the peasants and herdsmen and also through loudspeakers in the market places. The people sang and danced in the streets of Lhasa and other towns as they received the news with profound joy.

The agrarian reforms started with the confiscation of feudal estates owned by the leading rebel elements of the nobility and allowing the entire crop to be distributed, free of rent or tax, in the first year, among the serfs who cultivated them. As for the other estates owned by the nobles and monasteries who did not take part in the rebellion, land rent was negotiated on the basis of 80 per cent for the peasants and 20 per cent for the owner. Later on, the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet negotiated with these owners and purchased those estates paying adequate compensation for the land, cattle and agricultural implements, leaving to each of them whatever residence he chose to live in and whatever portion of land he needed for personal use. Lands were purchased at a price equal to the net income per acre for six years. The implements and livestock were purchased at market



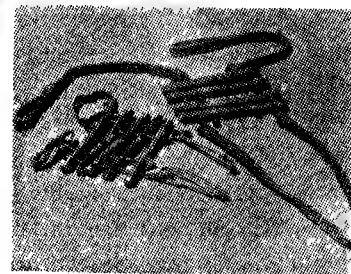
*The people sang and danced in the streets of Lhasa and other towns as they received the news of the abolition of serfdom as the first step in democratic reforms.*



1



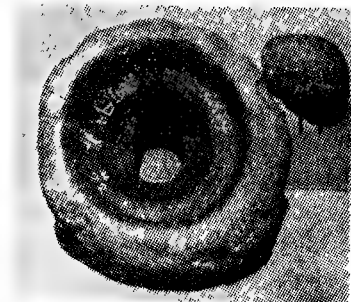
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3

1. Shackles;
2. Wooden handcuffs;
3. Thumb-screws, instruments to torture the fingers, used in the prison of the "nang-tzeshag" (municipal government) in Lhasa;
4. Stone instrument used to knock out eyes.

*The Military Control Commissions moved out from one manorial estate to the other confiscating the whips, shackles, wooden handcuffs and other torture instruments used by the feudal lords and monasteries for generations to subdue the serfs and got the serfs themselves to destroy them.*



4

value in different areas. Ultimately all lands, implements and livestock so purchased were distributed freely to the associations of peasants and herdsmen.

The military control commissions composed of People's Liberation Army personnel and the patriotic people of Tibet moved out from one manorial estate to the other confiscating the whips, shackles, wooden handcuffs and other torture instruments used by the feudal lords and monasteries for generations to subdue the serfs and got the serfs themselves to destroy these instruments with their own hands, thus, giving them the confidence that the old serfdom had gone for ever.

Accusation meetings to expose all the grave crimes and misdeeds of the feudal lords were organized by the peasant associations. The former feudal owners who had committed grave crimes and who led the rebellion were brought before these meetings and the serfs, who were their victims, were given the opportunity to speak out and denounce those crimes and misdeeds in their presence while they stood in front of the accusing serfs, bowing from their waist. The feudal debt-titles were brought before these meetings and after reading loudly, one by one, for the serfs to hear, these documents were heaped up and burnt. These documents related to contracts for wula service, poll tax arrears, grain debts for seed, compound interests accumulated on loans for generations and various other kinds of feudal service charges. All these were sent up in flames as the feudal owners gazed, without expression, at the fires that consumed the instruments of their feudal power.

The democratic reforms were carried out in the

monasteries too, with the active co-operation of the patriotic lamas. For this purpose, committees consisting largely of lower lamas and a few upper class lamas, who had not taken part in the rebellion, were set up. These committees conducted an educational campaign to enlighten the lamas of the progressive policies of the Central Government and the sufferings of the serfs in the cruel serfdom in Tibet. The accusation meetings were also held in the monasteries where the lower lamas who belonged to the serf class were encouraged to speak out and expose the long standing abuses in the monasteries. The abolition of forced labour and personal servitude in the monasteries as well as in the estates owned by the monasteries were announced at these meetings.

After the first six months of such education, the lamas were allowed to set up their own new administration on the basis that those lamas who were learned in the religion handled all religious matters and that the affairs relating to housing, food and other matters relating to their daily life were democratically managed by a committee on which the lower lamas had representation.

Along with the abolition of serfdom, the posts held by lamas such as managers and inspectors of manorial estates, managers of usurious loans, rent and tax collectors, business and trade managers and labour supervisors were all abolished. The courts, jails and torture chambers maintained by the monasteries were also abolished and torture instruments confiscated.

In various districts, self defence armed forces of patriotic Tibetans were organized by the People's Lib-



*Demonstration by 20,000 citizens in Lhasa voicing determined support for the complete suppression of the rebellion.*

eration Army to replace the old Tibetan army. In the old Tibetan army there were little over three thousand men who had all turned rebels in the March, 1959, rebellion.

During the campaign of democratic reforms, the Tibetan students who were studying in the universities in Peking and other parts of China went back to Tibet to assist the social and administrative transformation and reorganization. Between the year 1951 and 1959, over ten thousand Tibetan students, mostly from serf

families, received education in these universities. They had taken up posts in Tibet in political, educational, and administrative organizations.

The shackles of serfdom that impeded progress in Tibet were, thus, steadily broken up, and the dark and cruel serf system gradually changed and the serfs emancipated.

The Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, carried out these democratic reforms in accordance with the constitution, aspirations of the broad masses of the Tibetan people and the social, economic and cultural characteristics of Tibet and laid the foundation for the building of a prosperous, socialist new Tibet.

## PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT

After the completion of the first two stages of democratic reforms, election to the newly constituted local bodies at various levels took place. For the first time in Lhasa's long history, a municipal conference of elected representatives assembled on January 20, 1960. The purpose of this conference was to organize the new administrative set up for the city of Lhasa. There were one hundred deputies elected by the people's organizations representing about 170,000 people living in greater Lhasa consisting of eight districts and six city wards. The city was divided into four administrative wards — north, south, east and west. Two additional wards in the suburbs were also included in the city proper. In the city of Lhasa alone there were about 35,000 people. Among these deputies were peasants and herdsmen (former serfs), traders, lamas and patriotic upper strata of the nobility.

The new Mayor, Tsuiko Dongchu Tseren, in his opening speech declared that the democratic revolution had been basically completed in Lhasa which was the stronghold of serfdom in Tibet. The Mayor also announced that 120,000 peasants of Greater Lhasa had become owners of 70,000 acres they tilled. The usurious debts, handed down from generations with accumulated interests, had been either completely wiped out or greatly reduced saving for the peasants an average per capita

of 1500 pounds of grain. Work had been found for 5,000 unemployed. Houses were built for 300 homeless paupers. Dirty uneven streets had been paved and the city looked clean. There were no public schools in Lhasa before liberation. Now there were one hundred and fifty. Seven thousand former serfs, their sons and daughters received education in these schools. Old poverty-stricken Lhasa had become a lively Lhasa full of hope, declared the Mayor.

In the city wards, neighbourhood committees were organized for the purpose of improving the living conditions. Altogether twenty seven neighbourhood committees functioned in the city of Lhasa. These associations of citizens had organized night-schools and courses for the education of the illiterates, distributed unemployment relief given by the government to those unemployed before they were settled in employment, engaged in sanitation work such as cleaning up their own neighbourhood and sweeping the streets and yards, assisted in locating homes abandoned by the rebels who fled to India after the rebellion and settled the homeless in them and promoted the democratic team spirit in developing the city.

In the old sector of the city of Lhasa, its neighbourhood committee, under the chairmanship of a former slave woman who had become an activist in the democratic reforms, had taken action to close down three brothels, twelve gambling houses and four opium dens and cleared the area of prostitution, brawling and gambling.

These neighbourhood committees normally consisted of persons belonging to various strata of the inhabitants of that neighbourhood of the city. The traders, crafts-

men, workers, members of the nobility and in some cases even lamas had come into these committees.



*The children of the emancipated Tibetan serfs going to school in the morning sun. The number of children attending school had reached 60,000 in 1966.*

The local government institutions in the districts, outside Lhasa, were also formed almost simultaneously. The people's elected representatives took over the administration in those areas. Ninety-two per cent of the townships and villages in entire Tibet went through democratic vote electing 30,000 representatives to peasant committees, people's councils of various grades, village councils, town councils and district councils. The number of Tibetan official cadres working in these institutions at various levels rose to as many as 16,000.

By the end of 1961, all land had been distributed to the rural population living in all 78 districts in Tibet, including pasture lands to herdsmen, through their respective associations. Over 1,000 peasant associations were functioning in the main five areas of Lhasa, Loka, Chamdo, Shigatse and Lingtse. The liberated serfs, in mutual aid teams, pooling their resources such as draught animals, ploughs and other agricultural implements, collectively set out on high scale farming. Their enthusiasm was very high since they had, by now, become the masters of their own destiny. The land implements and finally the crop belonged to them. All over Tibet, in 1966, there were about 20,000 mutual aid teams and in the main five districts 50 communes, all engaged in socialist production.

Thousands of technicians from other parts of China arrived in Lhasa to assist the Tibetan development projects. Among them were geologists, soil experts, engineers, doctors, nurses and veterinary surgeons.

Experimental farms were set up to examine the possibility of increasing the yield in existing fields of barley, rye, wheat and paddy and to introduce new crops



*There was no public health service in pre-liberation Tibet. Now every one in Tibet enjoys free medical treatment.*

to the Tibetan plateau. Formerly, there had been only six kinds of vegetables in Tibet. After experiments forty-two varieties of vegetables were introduced to the Tibetan farms. Booklets giving particulars on methods of cultivation and kinds of crops that could be successfully introduced to the fields were printed in the Tibetan language and distributed in all farming areas, along with experimental seeds. Large scale water conservancy projects were undertaken in farming areas. Educational courses in farm technique were introduced into the peasantry.

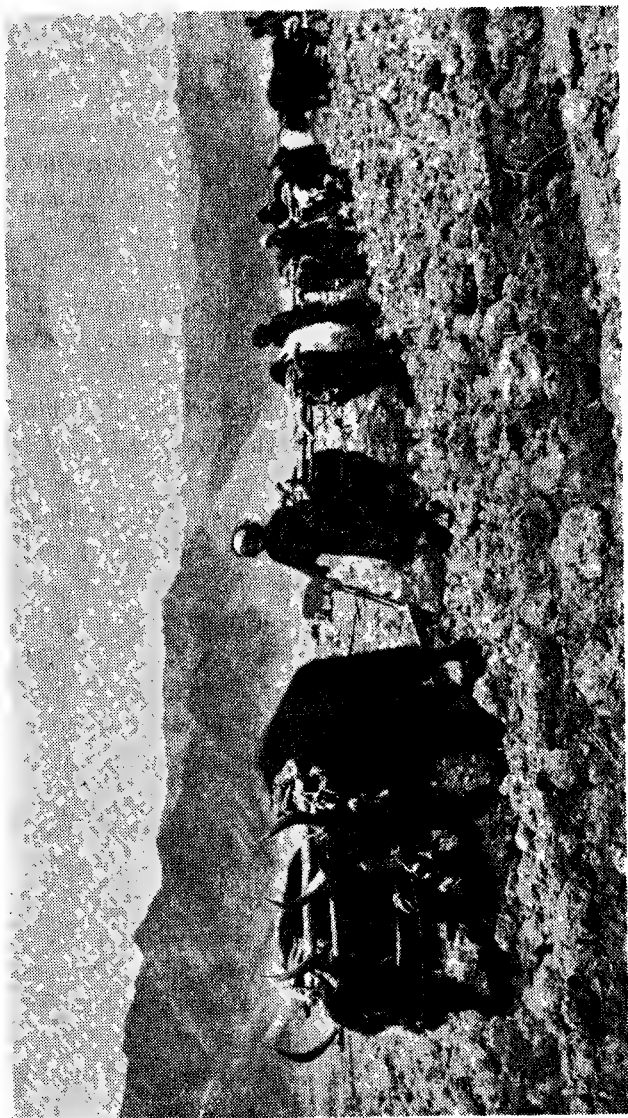
Thousands of modern farm tools were brought into Tibet from other parts of China, such as walking ploughs and harrows.

Thus, during the first six years, from 1959 to 1965, the agricultural production was increased by 45 per cent throughout Tibet.

Reforms in pastures had taken more time than in the agricultural areas due to the great extent of the vast pastoral area with scattered clusters of small settlements of herdsmen miles apart, complexity of the ownership of livestock and the inaccessibility by any other mode of transport than on horse and yak.

Out of 800,000 square miles of land in entire Tibet, pastoral area constituted about 650,000 square miles, i.e., more than four fifths of Tibet. The grazing right of these millions of acres of pasture land had been owned, formerly, by absentee nobles and monasteries. An investigation in 1960 had revealed that there were between five and a half to seven million livestock of yak, horses, cattle, sheep and goats in Tibet. These herds were owned by the Kasha, the nobility and the monastery. The





*The liberated serfs, in mutual aid teams, pooling their resources such as draught animals, ploughs and other agricultural implements, collectively set out on high scale farming.*

herdsmen, who were serfs under these three categories of owners looked after the herds under a complex and complicated taxation system.

The grass in these pastures were very scanty. The herds had no shelter at all. During heavy storms they were wiped out. Leopard, tiger, and wolf often attacked them. The heavy snow that fell in winter killed many young ones.

The nobles and monasteries collected, through their agents in the pastoral area, butter, hides, wool and fur. The serfs who looked after the herds had to depend on the mercy of their masters. The hides, wool, fur, musk and medicinal herbs had been Tibet's main exports that brought cash income. The three groups of feudal lords exported these goods on yak-back to India and from there to other foreign countries and bought luxury goods for their comfort from India and other foreign lands. They also imported finished goods made of these raw materials from India, paying high prices which included transport to and from.

The old system gradually disappeared with the organization of collective farms in the pastoral areas. The introduction of better varieties of grass, better breeding methods, shelter against sudden storms, prevention and curing of disease, education in livestock keeping and well run pastures with decent human life for the herdsmen like in inner Mongolia and Sinkiang brought about a tremendous development in the pastoral economy of Tibet, increasing the production during the first six years from 1959 to 1965 by 36 per cent. The better marketing facilities provided through state trading organization with its collecting centres to purchase meat, milk,



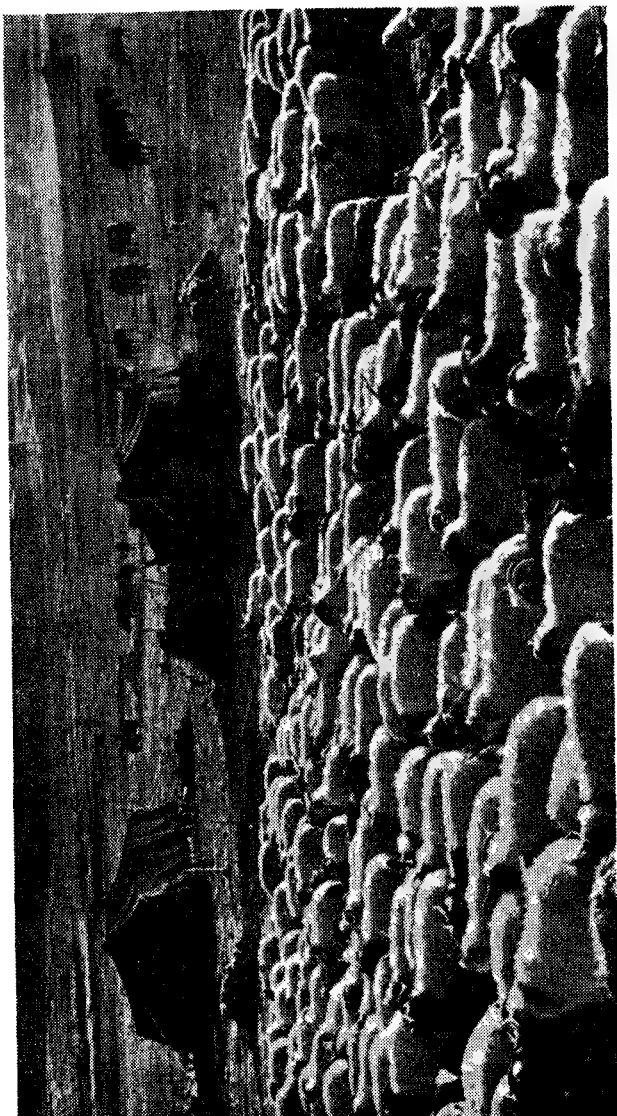
*Experimental farms were set up to examine the possibility of increasing the yield in existing fields of barley, rye, wheat and paddy. Here the happy peasants are looking forward to a bumper harvest of wheat.*

butter, hide, fur and wool gave the collective farms of herdsmen considerable income. The supply of food, clothing, tea and other materials required by the herdsmen at cheap prices through state agencies contributed greatly to the raising of their living standard.

Except for a few handicrafts, there were no big industries in Tibet before liberation. Tanning of hides, leather work, making felt boots and fur caps, weaving of coarse woollen cloth called *pulu*, weaving carpets and rugs, carpentry work, silver and iron metal work were among the few handicrafts of the Tibetans. These handicraftsmen were serfs. The raw material and implements were owned by the masters, who exploited the handicraftsmen to such an extent that they lived beggarly lives.

After liberating these serfs from the yoke of cruel feudal serfdom, co-operatives of handicraftsmen were organized to improve their condition with loans from the state to assist them in the initial stages. These co-operatives were provided with improved implements and tools as well as workshops with better facilities. These small workshops were developed, gradually, into large scale factories where hundreds of craftsmen found employment. The raw material such as wool, fur and hide, formerly sent out of Tibet to foreign markets through India, now found their way, in large quantities, to these factories in Tibet itself and finished goods came out to the market. The income of the craftsmen increased considerably and their living standard improved.

Transport was the biggest handicap in the development of big industries in Tibet. The big machinery, tractors and equipment had to be transported through 1,300 miles of difficult and rough road tracks running



*The old system gradually disappeared with the organization of collective farms in the pastoral areas. Well run pastures with decent human life for the herdsmen brought about a tremendous development in the pastoral economy of Tibet.*

through the high mountain plateau and passes, at times curving on the snow-covered ridges at an elevation of over 15,000 feet. The trucks, in addition to the loads, had to carry additional petrol in barrels to re-fill their tanks on the way.

The transport problem will remain, this way, till the railroad to Lhasa which is now under construction through Sining, side by side with Chinghai-Lhasa highway, is completed.

Surmounting all these difficulties, the Chinese experts and technicians have, with the assistance of Tibetan cadres, built 60 small and medium size factories including a fairly big cement factory in Lhasa, by 1965. This cement factory had produced, in the first year itself, twenty thousand tons of cement. All the cement required for building the bridges, culverts and causeways on the Tibet-Nepal highway between Lhasa and Kathmandu, was supplied by this cement factory. The engineers, technicians and the factory committee of over three hundred Tibetan workers were planning for higher production and improvements at the time of our visit, in the afternoon of September 18, 1966, to this factory, at the foot of a mountain, about three or four miles away from the centre of the city.

Hydro-electric power plants, stone quarries, brick and tile factories and timber mills had come up simultaneously with the development of highways and roads around Lhasa and other districts. The number of Tibetan workers in these factories had risen to 20,000. The first generation of the Tibetan working class had, thus, been nurtured.

A large scale housing programme had been put into

operation in building modern houses with improved facilities using bricks, tiles, lime and cement to replace the old mud and stone flat-roofed low huts with hardened mud floors, in Lhasa as well as in other districts. Yak-back transport had been replaced by auto trucks in many areas where road tracks had been constructed. Horse-carts were also in operation transporting materials to rural areas.

In the Tibetan development programmes, road building had received priority. Inaccessible villages and settlements beyond high mountains and plateaus have been connected to the main roads that led to the cities and towns by cart-tracks and jeep-tracks. We could see hundreds of Tibetan workers and People's Liberation Army men engaged in road construction in Tibet during our tour in the cities and suburbs. The main roads were being tarred, starting from the Lhasa city end at the time of our visit. A few miles, in all directions, had been completed. Before liberation the Tibetans did not have even a single mile of highway. By 1966, there were highways to the extent of over 10,000 miles, creating favourable conditions for the expansion of economic construction and development. Two great bridges had been built, one over the biggest river Tsangpo and the other over the river Lhasa. Passenger bus services had been extended to cover about 95 per cent of the suburban areas and also along the three great highways connecting the other provinces of China.

Tele-communication facilities had been extended to all important towns and districts. There were 90 post offices in Tibet in 1966. Dispatch of telegraphic messages in Tibetan language had been introduced.

A socialist commercial net work had been established with state commerce as its main base. There were 180 state commercial enterprises and 700 supply and marketing co-operatives and consumer's co-operatives in Tibet in 1966. Markets both in the towns and countryside appeared thriving.

Before liberation, Tibet was a "forbidden zone" for modern science, culture and knowledge. Not a single public school nor an institute for scientific research was there in Tibet. Superstition and ignorance had come to stay, binding over a million serfs in uninterrupted mental blindness.

From 1959 to 1966, 1,600 primary schools and 7 middle schools had been set up in Tibet. The number of children attending these schools had reached 60,000. Besides, a nationality institute and a teachers' training school for training Tibetan teachers had been established. For adult education, evening schools and part-time schools in rural villages and pastoral areas had been organized. Thousands of peasants and herdsmen had taken an active interest in studying in these schools. The liberated serfs had, now, got the first generation who could read and write.

For the cultural advancement of the Tibetan people, 170 institutes for cultural affairs and 120 film projection centres have been established.

There were no newspapers, magazines or periodicals in Tibet before liberation. The first daily newspaper in Tibetan language came out of the press in Lhasa on April 22, 1956. A number of new magazines and periodicals had come into circulation.

There was no public health service in pre-liberation

Tibet, nor was there a single institute for modern treatment. After liberation, 15 modern hospitals with 1,400 sick-beds in important towns and 140 clinics in rural villages and remote pastoral areas, had been set up. Now, every one in Tibet enjoys free medical treatment. The health of the nation has been greatly improved.

## HIDDEN VILLAGE IN THE VALLEY

In the morning of September 18, 1966, we visited a village people's commune about sixty miles away from Lhasa. For over two hours, we travelled by jeep along a new jeep track that had been cut recently through mountain rocks, valleys and pastures. The scenery resembled that of the Ramboda Pass in Ceylon with the exception that the cliffs on either side of the track were covered with thick layers of silvery snow shining brightly in the blazing sun. Half-way, we stopped at a stream that brought down the icy cold water from the melting snow caps of the rock cliffs, to refresh ourselves.

The commune, which was a farmland of about 560 acres of flat land situated at an elevation of about 14,000 feet above sea level, squeezed in between the rocky cliffs covered with snow, had a population of 507 people belonging to 112 families. It was called the Red Flag People's Commune.

Before liberation, this land was owned by three subsidiary monasteries under the Pota-la monastery of the Dalai Lama. Two of these monasteries, named Namje Zhachang and Sheetha Zhachang, were in Lhasa and the other, named Ladui Zhachang, was in Qu River district. Ninety per cent of the inhabitants of this village were former serfs owned by the three monasteries. They tilled the land and cultivated it.

The monasteries collected the harvest through their officers who were resident in the village, giving the serfs a small portion of the grains which was not at all sufficient for them to eat till the next harvest. Their living conditions, those days, were miserable. They had no proper housing. The houses that had the appearance of human dwellings were those of the collecting officers of the monasteries who were responsible for the administration of the village and collecting of the grains at the harvest and levying of various kinds of taxes. The poor serfs had to carry the loads of grains, after the harvesting, some times on their backs, all the way to the granary of the respective monastery sixty miles away. The herds of sheep that were grazing on the mountain slopes of this village also belonged to the monasteries. The herdsmen who looked after them in those miserable days had nothing to call their own. They were given only a certain portion of the farm produce at the will of the master, hardly sufficient for their existence.

There was nothing called education or health services or any kind of communication such as postal facilities in this village those days. The serfs used to walk sixty miles to the city of Lhasa once a year, during the Great Prayer Festival, in March. During this festival, the serfs had to carry as offerings to the Pota-la monastery money coins and grains. They had never offered flowers at the shrines of the Pota-la monastery, since it was not customary. This was the way of life in this village eight years ago, in 1959.

We saw with our own eyes what liberation meant to the former victims of the vicious serfdom in this

remote rural village hidden among the distant hills in the deep valley.

Now, the entire farmland was owned by the villagers who cultivated it. During the democratic reforms a peasant association was formed in the village and the administration was taken over by this association removing the collectors for the monasteries from their posts. The residence of one of the collectors in the village became the office of the association. The villagers themselves planned out the development of their village on the basis of a people's commune with the assistance of the technicians and agricultural experts who had had the necessary training in the universities in Peking and other provinces in China.

Tancho, a former peasant serf woman had been elected as the Director of the commune. She had been elected the Director not because it was necessary to keep to the Tibetan custom which recognized the woman as the head of the family but because she was the most efficient person in the village who had had some knowledge of socialist construction in other provinces of China which she had gained during her visits to those provinces as a woman delegate from Tibet, some months earlier.

Tancho and her husband, the Deputy Director Ceshun and her husband and the other leading cadres of the commune received us on our arrival at the office.

Before this village was named the Red Flag People's Commune in 1965, it was known as the Bang Dui village. In ancient Tibetan writings it was referred to as Chung Dui village. By common usage, it had come

to be popularly known as Bang Dui. The name used in the ancient writings, Chung Dui, has a legend in the folk-tales of the village. According to folk-tales, some centuries ago, there was a lama called Chung Ba who made it a practice to go round the Tibetan villages preaching the doctrine. Once, when he came to this village for preaching, he suddenly collapsed and died. His corpse was separated into two parts. The upper part was buried in this village and the lower part was taken to another village, probably, to the village where his monastery was, for burial there. Henceforth, this village came to be known as Chung Dui. "Chung" is the first part of the lama's name. "Dui" in Tibetan language meant "upper". Thus, "Chung Dui" meant the place where the upper part of the lama's body was buried. This is merely a hearsay. There was no historical evidence in support of this legend in the ancient writings of Tibet. There was another saying that it was only a place-name without any contained meaning.

After the democratic reforms of 1960, nine mutual aid teams were organized in this village on voluntary basis. In February 1962, an elementary co-operative was set up, as a trial, with twelve families taking part in it. This set an example for collectivisation of the whole village. On July 20, 1965, Bang Dui People's Commune was set up. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the commune members who thought that the name Bang Dui was not good, changed it into the Red Flag People's Commune, in July, 1966.

The commune was divided into five production teams according to the clusters of dwellings of the people

that traditionally existed in this village. The larger team had 130 people and the smaller one had 30 people. Each production team had a team leader and a deputy team leader in charge of production and two other team leaders for political education.

Tancho, the Director, who was 25 years old, was a member of the Communist Party. She was born to a serf family. There were nine persons in her family including her father, mother and her husband. Her father Cetzu, aged 53, was, now, a member of the production team. Pin Bai, her mother, was also 53 years old. Dujé, her husband, a former serf from Loka area, was, now, a cadre working in a district office of Chenkuan in Lhasa region. Her younger brother, who was 24 years old, was the head of the Lam District administrative office. Her elder sister, who was 28 years old, was a member of the commune. Her younger sister, aged 16 years, was attending school. She had two daughters and a niece.

Agriculture: The Red Flag People's Commune had 560 acres under cultivation. The main crops were paddy, rye, barley and some vegetables. Before the democratic reforms, the production was at a very low level. The serfs who worked in the fields those days were not at all enthusiastic in their work since the major portion of what they produced were taken by the landlords. After the democratic reforms, when the collective ownership of the land by the tiller was established, their enthusiasm was raised to a very high level which reflected in a corresponding increase in the output.

In 1959, the whole area under cultivation was 502



*In the office of the Red Flag People's Commune, Tanchu, the woman Director of the commune and her husband told us all about this village.*

acres. The average output per acre was 18 bushels. In 1965, after the democratic reforms, the land under cultivation was extended by another 45 acres bringing the total to 547 acres. The average yield was increased to 33 bushels per acre. In 1966, the land under cultivation was extended by another 13 acres bringing the total to 560 acres. The average yield, in 1966, was 37 bushels per acre which was an increase by 106 per cent over the 1959 production figure.

This commune also had raised an orchard covering  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres with 1,535 fruit trees including apples, pears and peaches.

Afforestation had been taken up as a major scheme to prevent soil erosion on the hill slopes. Specially, when the thick layers of snow started melting, they rolled down the mountain rocks and soil destroying the fields in the low-lying areas. By the end of 1966, under the afforestation scheme, 25,587 forest trees had been planted.

Since the people's commune was set up, it had constructed 2,555 yards long new irrigation channels and repaired and re-adjusted channels about one and a half miles long.

New-type ploughs were used for ploughing the fields and ploughing was done three times a year for rotation of crops. High quality seeds were obtained by the commune, in exchange, from the government stores. Since the land was put under cultivation three times during the year, rotating crops, the commune had collected the base compost fertilizer at the rate of one ton per acre, in addition to about ten thousand pounds of chemical fertilizer, for the whole commune





*Tancho (third from left in front row), explained to us the new methods used to increase the yield of the rye fields.*

area, for the year. Insecticide for killing insects, including under soil insects, was used. A battle for destroying rats had been waged throughout the commune and after two years of prevention and destruction, rats were almost completely exterminated. Formerly, the sowing of grains was done by hand. In 1966, sowing machines were used and, by the end of that year, 240 acres were sowed by the machines. An area of 23 acres were allotted for model plots of scientific experiment.

**Animal husbandry:** According to the statistics, in March 1967, this people's commune owned 146 draught oxen, 328 head of cattle, 28 horses, 5 mules, 68 donkeys, 636 sheep, 519 goats and 233 pigs. It also had a small poultry farm. The birth rate of lamb has risen by eighty per cent, because of the new methods introduced to attend lamb-birth. The methods of live-stock keeping had been considerably improved.

**Subsidiary occupations:** The commune ran a hydraulic power mill, a refinery for edible oil and a sewing and tailoring team. During the slack farming season, the commune members took up some transport work of outsiders which brought them some income. In 1966, the commune had earned from subsidiary occupations 14,908 rupees (7,454 yuan). The average monthly income was 1,242 rupees (621 yuan). A bean-noodle mill had also been set up which had just started production. The average monthly income during the first five months of 1967 from subsidiary occupations was 1,400 rupees (700 yuan). This showed an increase by 11.3 per cent compared with the income during the same period of the previous year.

**Industry:** The natural limitations had been a hindrance to any large scale industrial growth in this commune area. However, shortly after the establishment of the commune, a small hydro-electric power station, with a capacity of ten kilowatts, had been built by constructing a dam across a stream that flowed down from the snow-capped peaks on the eastern side of the village. From this power station, electricity had been supplied to 80 per cent of the households of the commune. That was the first time the villagers of this commune area had seen electric lights. With a plan to supply all residential houses with electricity and also to set up a power-operated flour mill, a thresher and other machines, the commune had started constructing a new hydro-electric power station with a capacity of 110 kilowatts. We saw the construction work in progress, during our visit to this work site. A pumping station to pump water to the fields at a higher elevation, had been set up with the machinery gifted by the people of Hopei province.

**Education:** There was a primary school, run by the commune, with two teachers and sixty-four children. The number of children attending the school represented seventy-three per cent of the total number of school-aged children of the whole commune. The school possessed a piece of land which was about one and a half acres in extent. The income from the grain produced in this piece of land was utilized to cover the expenditure of the school and the wages of the teachers.

There was also a night-school which had an attendance of forty persons. In addition to that, there was a cultural centre which provided the members of

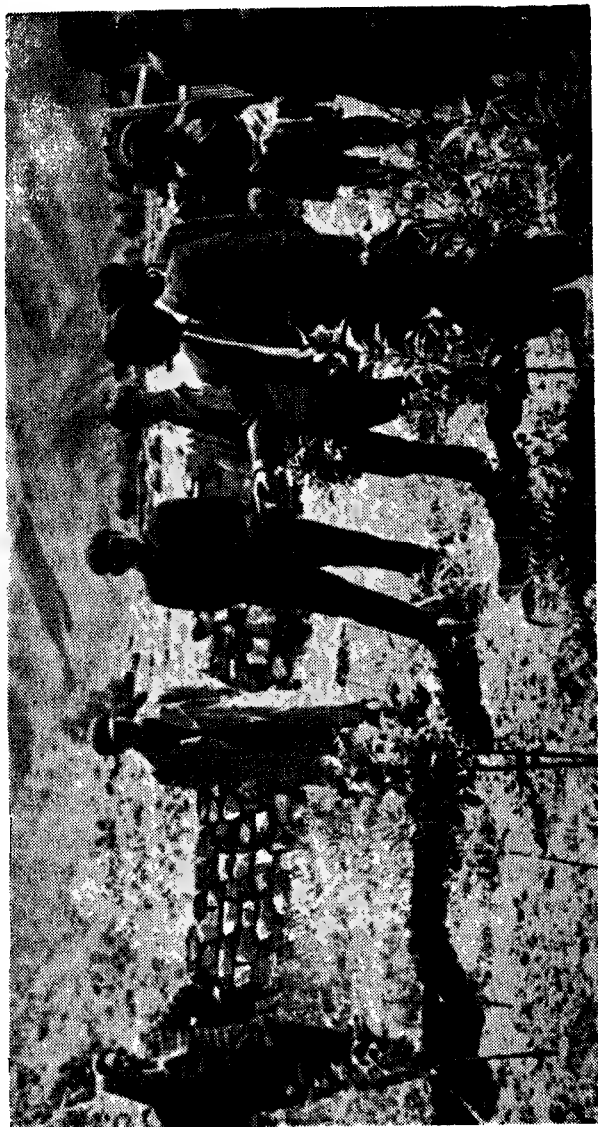
the commune, regularly, with the latest books, magazines and pictorials. A loudspeaker set with two amplifiers relayed, everyday, programmes of the Central as well as Tibetan People's Radios.

In 1965, a poor peasant named Basang and some others organized two groups for the study of Chairman Mao's works. The Communist Party branch in the commune divided the whole commune into five study groups in compliance with the demand of the commune members and the study of Chairman Mao's works was carried out in a planned way.

**Health services:** There was a health centre in the commune with six trained public health workers of whom two were full-time and four were part-time. In addition, each production team had a trained health worker. The patients with minor ailments could receive treatment at any moment at the health centre and those with serious illnesses were sent to the district hospital or Lhasa general Hospital for treatment.

**Living standard:** Since the establishment of the commune the living standard of the people were raised to a high level by increased production and better social facilities. In 1965, exclusive of grain for seed, fodder, collective reserve, public tax and surplus for the market, the average quantity distributed per person in the commune was 834 *jin* (one *jin* = 1.1023 pounds). In measures it was 460. The average income per capita, exclusive of expenditure for production and funds for the public reserve, was 180 *yuan* (one *yuan* = 2 rupees).

In 1966, the average quantity of grain distributed per person was 1,000 *jin*. That was 550 measures. The per capita income also showed a corresponding increase.



*The Red Flag People's Commune is bringing up the first orchard in the village with apple and peach trees.*

The commune members also got a share of wool and oil bearing crops from the collective.

Tsaiwang, a poor peasant of slave origin, in this commune, was living on relief grain distributed by the state, in the year immediately after the reforms, due to low development in production. His family had three members. The very first year when he joined the commune, he earned so much that he could pay off all his debts and in addition, he could get a share of 2,940 *jin* of grain (about 1,620 measures) and 150 *yuan* (300 rupees). He exclaimed, "I rose up for the first time when the reforms were carried out and after joining the people's commune I got another chance to rise up."

A sixty-year old poor peasant, Chichielam, remarked, "My whole family wandered from place to place in the old society and in those days we looked forward to early death, for it was better to die than to live in that misery. After the reform, the Communist Party and the government helped to collect our family together and settle down in this commune bringing us happiness. After the setting up of the people's commune, we lead still a happier life than before. Now, I am old, yet I often see myself as a young boy in my dreams. I shall live several decades more."

Chairman Mao's words, "**The poor want to remake their lives. The old system is dying and a new system is being born. Chicken feathers really are flying up to heaven.**" reverberated in this village commune in reality. Upholding Chairman Mao's proletarian line, the commune members had taken the path of socialism in this remote village hidden among the high hills of the Tibetan plateau.

## A LIBERATED SLAVE

One day, during our stay in Tibet, we visited the home of a liberated serf in the old city of Lhasa. We stopped our motor-car in a cross street and walked through a small lane a few yards and reached his home which was on the upper floor of an upstairs structure. The lane ran through two rows of old model buildings with mud and gravel walls. The upper floors were constructed by placing round wooden cross bars on the walls and plastering the floors with mud and gravel mixed with water, beaten down to level. There was a wooden ladder in a passage on the ground floor about eight feet high which we climbed to get to the upper floor where we were received by the home people. The reception room was about ten feet by twelve feet. In the centre was a low table on which a kettle full of butter tea, enamel mugs and two saucers full of sweets were kept to entertain us. On three sides of the table were low wooden benches, covered with rugs, for us to sit down. The walls were adorned with Chairman Mao's pictures. There were fifteen of them in different sizes.

Jinla, Dantan's wife greeted us and requested us to take seats and started pouring the butter tea from the kettle to the mugs. We were not accustomed to drinking this type of tea which was a combination of butter, water and little tea boiled together producing a thick oily liquid suited to resist the severe Tibetan cold.

We tasted a little but could not consume further since it was not palatable to us. The Mayor of Lhasa, Namji, who was in our company, however, enjoyed the full mug.

We informed our hosts that the purpose of our visit was to find out the way of life they led now and also in the past. Jinla started speaking. Dantan was seated by her side. According to Tibetan custom, wife was the head of the family. We did not know that. We were wondering why Jinla was speaking while Dantan was listening. Later, only, we came to know that it was in keeping with the Tibetan custom. Dantan, now and then, added a word or two to assist Jinla when she was relating their story.

Dantan Wanchu was 44 years old, in 1966. His mother was a slave woman owned by a nobleman named Lapu. From Lapu's ownership she, later on, passed over to the ownership of another slave-owner named Doren. At that time, Dantan was 12 years old. Young Dantan also became a slave with his mother under the new master, Doren, where he remained so until the suppression of the rebellion organized by the upper strata reactionary serf-owners of Tibet, in March, 1959, and the liberation of slaves and serfs during the subsequent campaign for democratic reforms in Tibet. Dantan was trained by his master, Doren, to stitch clothes and he was made to work as a slave tailor, toiling into late nights, without sufficient food and clothing. One day, it so happened that when the clothes he stitched were not to the satisfaction of the master, he was severely beaten on the side of the head, as a result of which his ear-drum burst and he lost hearing.



*Jinla, Dantan's wife greeted us and requested us to take seats and started pouring the butter tea from the kettle to the mugs.*

He was tied to a post. His mother pleaded Doren to show mercy on her son. Instead of letting little Dantan go, this vicious slave-owner knocked out the eyes of his mother and tortured her to death. The body was thrown out through the window to the courtyard, ordering the other slaves to take it away. Fastened to the post, little Dantan was witnessing the whole episode with his own eyes helplessly. When Jinla was relating the story thus, Dantan who was seated by her side added, "I will never forget this debt of blood and tears."

Jinla was a slave woman belonging to a guru lama prelate named Demolamola in the Tsefu Monastery.

She was from Linchi area. She was sold by Demolamola to another slave-owner named Sondo, at the age of 15 years. While she was working under Sondo, she met Dantan and got married to him with the permission of the master. Even after the marriage, they belonged to their respective masters. Of their children, the boys belonged to the father's master, Doren and the girls to the mother's master, Sondo. After the marriage, the husband had to feed Jinla and also their children with what was given to him by his master. What actually he received was only a small wooden ladle-full of barley gruel a day as food which was not enough to feed even the children. Jinla had no other way out except to beg in the streets of Lhasa with her children. They were living in some store room belonging to the master which was worse than a cattle-shed for which they had to pay five tael (one tael = one ounce of silver = 5 cents) a month as rent. Jinla

had to earn this by doing odd jobs and begging. When it became impossible to pay the rent, they ran away from this place. The master, however, traced them and brought them back by force and locked them up. As a punishment for running away from his control, the master unleashed a dog to bite Jinla who was pregnant at that time and her child in the womb was nearly strangled. The dog-bite had carried a scar on the child's forehead which was quite distinct even at the age of ten when we saw her.

It was at a time of despair that they were liberated by the People's Liberation Army after suppressing the March '59 rebellion led by the reactionary upper strata serf-owners of Tibet.

During the democratic reforms, under the leadership of the Communist Party, both, husband and wife, became active cadres in helping the reforms. They were given a house in Lishin street which was known in the past as Bajiao street. Electric lights for this house were installed for them by the government free of charge. When a tailors' co-operative was set up in the town, they joined it.

At the time of our visit, they had seven children. The eldest, a daughter, named Chujin who was 26 years old, worked in a consumer co-operative store. Two sons, Gangpa and Yangjin had become barbers. Their fourth child, Losang Chujin, was studying in the Tibetan Nationalities Institute in Yenyang with everything supplied by the government. The fifth child Yunden was a student at the Lhasa Middle School. The other two had not yet reached the school-going age.

The husband and wife had a monthly income of 60 *yuan* (120 rupees) which was almost the salary of a university graduate in China. Their children who were working also brought money to the family. They were not burdened with house rent or heavy taxes. The grains and vegetables were very cheap. The state trading centre supplied food and clothing at cheap rates. The miserable life they led in the past had gone for ever, yielding place to a new happy life. They expressed their gratitude to the Communist Party and Chairman Mao for liberating them from the hands of the most cruel and darkest serfdom that oppressed them for a number of years. The whole family was taking an active part in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution with a firm determination to consolidate the gains and prevent any attempt by the enemy to stage a come-back in Tibet to enslave them again.

## BRIDGE OVER RIVER TSANGPO

After three hours drive by motor-car from the city of Lhasa towards the south, on a dusty road which was not yet tarred, we reached the new bridge built over the great river Tsangpo at a point about one thousand miles down from its source in the Kailasa mountain range.

We were the first foreign visitors to drive on to this new bridge since it was completed, in June, 1966, and it was considered as an opening ceremony. The bridge was about a quarter of a mile long and the People's Liberation Army had taken only four months to build it.

Before the construction of this bridge a ferry had been used to transport travellers and goods across the river. The old ferry, now out of use, was stationed at the northern bank of the river, a few yards south of the new bridge, which brought back to one's memory the various stages of Tibet's past history. This was the ferry used by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and the reactionary upper strata rebel clique of Tibet, to cross the river, for the last time, when they fled to India in March, 1959, during the rebellion. This was also the ferry that ferried one thousand mule loads of gold, belonging to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, across the river when this heap of gold was smuggled out of the Potala Palace in Lhasa to a secret treasury in Sikkim

in 1951 and then to Calcutta, India, when this particular load of gold was allowed to be smuggled as legalized contraband by the Indian government, violating all foreign exchange regulations of India as well as China, after the Fourteenth Dalai Lama fled to India.

The traders from India to Lhasa, those days, used this ferry to cross the river with heavy loads of merchandise on the back of the yak, mule and the donkey. Tibetan fur, rock-salt, hides and medicinal herb found their way into the north Indian cities through this ferry.

South of the great Tsangpo River was the granary of Tibet, called the Loka area, where thousands of acres of land had been brought under cultivation, down through the ages, using its water. This area was also the thickly populated area in Tibet. The serf-owners of Loka were the richest in Tibet, where exploitation was the heaviest.

We sat on the railings of the bridge for a while enjoying the panoramic beauty of the range. The river here appeared to be quite deep with big waves pushing down the clear blue water, incessantly.

On the southern bank of the river was a monastery used by the reactionary rebels, in March, 1959, as one of their camps. After the rebellion, it had been abandoned by the lamas. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, after crossing the river by ferry, had rested here a while to collect his retinue for the rest of the journey.

All the cement used for the construction of this long bridge had been supplied by the new cement factory in Lhasa which had started production in 1965.

The new bridge had helped, to a very great extent, the economic development of Tibet. The transport of

modern agricultural machinery and equipment to the area south of the river had been made much easier now. So was the transport of other goods including consumer goods to that area and the transport of grains from that area to the other regions. Before the construction of this bridge, the transport, to and from, came to a standstill when the great river Tsangpo was in spate.

The road from Lhasa upto this new bridge ran zigzag avoiding the rocky cliffs, and, at times, our motor-cars were floating in the streams of melting snow. There were altogether three cars in our motorcade. Halfway, in a sticky valley, one of the cars got stuck in the muddy track. The passengers had to get down and push it out of the mud.

On this eighty-mile stretch of land, we passed through a number of Tibetan villages. All the inhabitants of each village lived in one big yard with a cluster of small old-styled low-roofed dwellings round which ran a stone and mud parapet wall, about four or five feet in height, which was the protection against the gust of severe cold wind. The court-yards were full of hay, collected to feed the herds in the winter and dried cow-dung which they used as fire-wood.

Just outside one of those village walls, we saw how a small lamb was being roasted on a lit-up fire by the roadside. One whole family was on this job, as our car passed this spot, about half past six in the evening. They looked happy and contented.

In some village settlements, new houses with brick and cement were being constructed.

In the valleys, we saw the Tibetan farmers working

in the wheat and rye fields and the herdsmen on the plains driving the sheep, yak and mules to the greenery for grazing.

Just below a culvert, some Tibetans were catching fish in the stream with the fishing rods.

Lorry loads of grains, fertilizers and building material were passing up and down this main roadway leading to southern Tibet.

The rocks on the roadside had been blasted to obtain rock slabs for house building as well as road building. The People's Liberation Army men and Tibetan workers were busy repairing the roads and building new culverts.

The setting sun in the western horizon was darting its golden rays over the Tibetan plateau at 8 o'clock in the evening when we returned to the city of Lhasa that day.



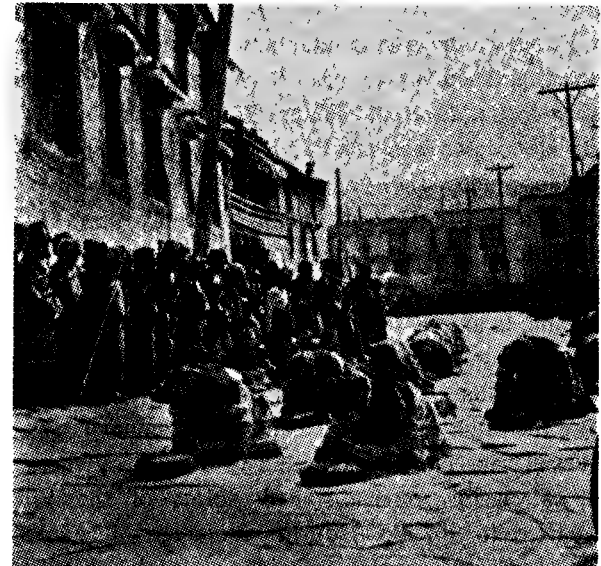
## TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Before the advent of Buddhism, the people of Tibet region of China were worshippers of mythical nature-gods and Rishis associated with Mount Kailasa. This mount Kailasa is the same mountain referred to by the Sanskrit scholar Kalidasa in his Epic Megha Duta, about one thousand five hundred years ago. The Kailasa Mountain Range, even today called by the same name, is situated in South Western Tibet, about one hundred miles north of Nepal. It runs parallel to the Himalayas, starting from the Tibet-Kashmir border region and stretching towards Lhasa, covering a distance of about one thousand miles. The great river Tsangpo which flows across the Tibetan plateau, over a thousand miles parallel to the Himalayas and then enters north-eastern India, under the name Brahmaputra, and joins the Ganges, has its source in the peak area of this Kailasa range. The source of the great river Indus which flows down through India and West Pakistan, is also in this Kailasa peak.

One of the mythical Rishis of Kailasa who commanded the reverence of pre-Buddhist nomad tribes of Tibet was known as Chen Rishi. 'Chen' in Tibetan language means 'great'. 'Rishi' is a Sanskrit term meaning 'sage'. So, Chen Rishi means the Great Sage.

Even centuries after the advent of Buddhism, the mythical nature-gods and Rishis of the pre-Buddhist era

remained in the memory of the superstitious nomad tribes of Tibet, so much so, that the rituals relating to them were intertwined with Mahayana Buddhism, producing completely a new religion, a type of Tibetan Buddhism, with Lhasa as its new base, which could be properly described as "Lamaism", a religion which is absolutely alien to the Theravada or Mahayana Buddhist philosophy. This new type of Tibetan Buddhism spread through Mongolia to Buriat Mongolia with the passage of time.



*The lamas prostrating themselves before the Jokhan Monastery in Lhasa during the Monlam (Summons Ceremony).*

Lamaism teaches that those who are holy and wise exist down the ages through re-incarnations. In Tibetan language they are called 'chugu'. In Sanskrit, 'guru'.

In Chinese, 'living buddha'.

The mythical 'Chen Rishi' had so much influence among the Tibetan tribes that even, in mid seventeenth century, the Fifth Dalai Lama who felt the need for a local sanction in dealing with superstitious tribes had a 'revelation' that he was a reincarnation of 'Chen Rishi'.

Buddhism spread over to Tibet through scholars and monks from India who crossed the Himalayas through Nepal, in the course of several centuries, after the passing away of the Gautama Buddha, in North India.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who became the Buddha (the enlightened one), was born in the Kingdom of Kapilawasthu, (present Tilaura Kot), in Nepal, in 563 B.C. He passed away in 483 B.C., at Kushinara. Some historians place the date of the passing away of the Buddha at 543 B.C. and his birth eighty years earlier. Immediately after the death of the Buddha, a council was held, in 483 B.C., during the reign of Ajatasattu in Rajagaha, a north Indian city, by his disciples, presided over by thera Mahakassapa, to collect all the discourses of the Buddha. One hundred years later, in 383 B.C., during the reign of Kalasoka, a second council was held at Vesali, in North India, presided over by thera Revata, to clarify some disputed points of the Vinaya. Thereafter, in 247 B.C., during the reign of Asoka, in India, the third council, presided over by thera Moggaliputta, was held in Pataliputra, another north Indian city. One year after this council, in 246 B.C., King Asoka's son, Mahinda, who was a Buddhist monk, went on a mission to Ceylon to preach the Doctrine to the Sinhala King Devanampiyatissa.

Up to that time, Theravada (disciple's career) Buddhism was the only doctrine known to the Buddhists. The written canons of Theravada, compiled in Alokavihare, in Matale, Ceylon, for the first time, in the first century B.C., during the reign of the Sinhala King Vattagamani, are preserved up to date in Pali. Theravada Buddhism, since then, had survived in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and other parts of South-east Asia.

It was under the Kushana Kings of the first century A.D., in India, that the Mahayana doctrine (greater-career or full Buddha-hood for all monks and laymen alike) was developed. Under this doctrine, the view that the world was full of Bodhisattvas, some mythical beings, and their reincarnations who undertook to 'save the world, was propagated. This doctrine played down individual attainment of Nirvana and the ideal of Arhatship and developed Bodhisattva worship.

The first Buddhist monks arrived in China with this Mahayana doctrine, in 65 A.D. and formed the first Buddhist community in Hsuehchow, in Chiangsu province, under the protection of a Han prince named Liu Ying.

The first council of Mahayana was held in 100 A.D., under King Kanishka, in India. After this council, they compiled the first canon of the Mahayana doctrine, in Sanskrit. Later on, this canon was translated into Chinese and Tibetan languages by the Indian monks who crossed over to China, in collaboration with the scholars of Chinese and Tibetan languages. This Mahayana canon absconded, almost entirely, the original doctrine.

The lamas of Tibet, who followed this canon, developed the peculiar type of Tibetan Buddhism, adding

to it the superstitious rituals and beliefs of the nomad tribes of the Tibetan plateau, bringing about a complete transformation of the already absconded doctrine into something quite alien to Buddhism in its Theravada or Mahayana form. This peculiar Tibetan doctrine was known as 'Lamaism'.

From the first century A.D. onwards, Mahayana Buddhist influence was felt in Tibet. When Buddhism faded away in its birth place, in the tenth century A.D., Lamaism was well established in Tibet.

It was in the seventh century A.D. that the local rulers of Tibet took a keen interest in encouraging Buddhist activities in Tibet. This atmosphere was created,



*The statue of Princess Wen Cheng enshrined in the Jokhan Monastery in Lhasa.*

specially, after the first notable local king of Tibet, Srontsan Gampo, in 641 A.D. married a princess from the royal family of Tang Dynasty in China, who happened to be a devoted follower of Mahayana doctrine. Another wife of King Srontsan, a princess from Nepal, also contributed to this climate.

The Princess Wen Cheng, from the royal family of Emperor Tai Tsung of Tang Dynasty, carried to the Royal Household of Srontsan Gampo in Tibet, in addition to a large number of handicraftsmen specialized in rice-milling, wine-brewing, paper and ink-making, silk-weaving and plenty of silk-worm eggs which were among her dowry, a statue of the Buddha, said to have been self created, and built a temple which upto date stands inside the Jokhan monastery in the centre of Lhasa. This was the first temple built in Lhasa. The Princess Wen Cheng is still a figure of admiration among the Tibetans in that one of the best traditional Tibetan plays sings her praises.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND MERGER OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS RULE

From the seventh century onwards, the unity of Tibetan region and Central China grew faster.

In 710 A.D., Han Princess named Chin Cheng, from the royal family of Emperor Chung Tsung of the Tang Dynasty, was given in marriage to the Tibetan King Tridetsogtan. Princess Chin Cheng took with her to the Royal Household of Tridetsogtan in Tibet, several thousand pieces of silk and brocade, Han acrobats and musical instruments. Later on, she got down a collection of Chinese classics. In 729 A.D., King Tridetsogtan, paying tribute to the Tang Emperor Hsuan Tsung, wrote that they were members of one family who cared for the happiness and prosperity of the common people throughout the land.

Again, in 821 A.D., the Tang Emperor Mu Tsung and the Tibetan King Triralpajian jointly erected a 'monument of unity of uncle and nephew' in Lhasa, which stands upto date, in good condition, in front of the famous Jokhan monastery.

Throughout the Tang Dynasty, Tibetan emissaries went to the Tang Court to present tributes and apply for trade. When a Tsampu (Tibetan ruler) died or new Tsampu was installed, the fact was reported to the Tang Court and when a new Emperor of the Tang Dynasty

was enthroned, greetings came from Tibet.

In the latter part of the Tang Dynasty, about the time of Emperor Wutsung, in the middle of the ninth century, internal disturbances broke out in Tibet as a result of the strife between the Tibetan King Lang Dharma and the upper strata of the lamas. King Lang Dharma was assassinated by the lamas and, thereafter, chaos reigned in Tibet. Many of the family members of the fallen king and his ministers fled to the Tang Court. Thereafter, Tibetan region was divided into several tribal groupings, each ruling supreme in the area under its control. They fought one another, incessantly. This chaotic situation lasted for four hundred years, until the beginning of the thirteenth century. No tribe had the power to re-unite Tibet.

The utter disunity and chaos in Tibet ended in 1253 A.D., when Emperor Hsien Tsung of the Yuan Dynasty sent an armed force to Tibet and unified the region incorporating it into the Yuan Empire. Since then, Tibet has been a part of the territory of China, under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Central Government.

The system of merging political and religious rule into one entity was first introduced, in 1275 A.D., by the then Emperor of China, Kublai Khan, of the Yuan Dynasty. Emperor Kublai Khan sought the assistance of a learned prelate of Tibet whose name was Pagspa, to introduce a new script for the Mongolian language. In recognition of the services of prelate Pagspa, of the Sakya sect of Buddhism in Tibet, the grateful Emperor conferred on him the title "Tutor of the great Yuan Empire" and made him the "King of the Law of the

Western Land of the Buddha"; and placed the Tibet region under prelate Pagspa's rule. This marked the beginning of the combination of political and religious rule in Tibet.

From then onwards, successive Yuan Emperors appointed a "Peace Commissioner" in Tibet (resembling the Resident Representative 'Amban' appointed by the Ching Dynasty in Tibet). The duty of the Peace Commissioner was to levy some taxes and collect tributes from the Tibetan people every year. The Yuan Dynasty also set up a number of courier stations and military posts in Tibet, conducted a census and instituted a system to check up the service records of the local officials.

Seventy five years afterwards, with the fall of the Yuan Dynasty, prelate Pagspa's ruling house was overthrown by a subordinate named Padmachupa of the Kagyuda (white) sect and he became the King of the Law in Tibet. This, however, did not bring any change in the relations between Tibet and the motherland. In 1372 A.D., King of the Law Chiayang, the second ruler of the Kagyuda sect, sent an emissary to Nanking to congratulate on the enthronement of Emperor Tai Tsu of the Ming Dynasty and to ask the Emperor to approve his rule in Tibet. Emperor Tai Tsu conferred several titles of honour upon him and made him the Tibetan ruler. Thereafter, when each King of the Law acceded to his high position, it became a practice to send an emissary to Peking to ask for title of honour and approval of his rule.

While the prelates of the Kagyuda (white) sect were ruling in Tibet, towards the end of the fourteenth century, a learned prelate named Sangkappa founded the

Gelug (yellow) sect. The first Chief Prelate of this sect, Dge-hdun Grub-pa was the first Dalai Lama of Tibet, although the title "Dalai Lama" came to be used only after it was conferred on the fifth incarnation of this Chief Prelate by the Chinese Emperor Shun Chih of the Ching (Manchu) Dynasty, in 1653. "Dalai" is a Mongolian word meaning "ocean". Lama means "wisdom". So, Dalai Lama means ocean of wisdom.

During the Ming Dynasty, friendly contact between the Tibetan people and other nationalities of China was further developed. In 1409, four Imperial emissaries were sent by the Ming Emperor Cheng Tsu, to Tibet, to invite prelate Sangkappa, the founder of the Gelug (yellow) sect, to preach the Buddhist canons in the interior of the country. Prelate Sangkappa was unable to undertake the mission personally and he sent his disciple, Jamchinchuje, as his representative to Peking. The Emperor Cheng Tsu conferred on him a title of honour.

The statistics of the Board of Rites of the Ming Dynasty show that, between 1450 A.D. and 1460 A.D., the number of the Tibetans who came to Peking to present tributes, annually, rose from three to four hundred in the first few years, to three to four thousand in the latter years.

When the Ming Dynasty was on the verge of collapse, the rule of the King of the Law of the Kagyuda sect in Tibet also tottered. The ruling house of Padmachupa, after seventy-five years of continued successions, was overthrown by a subordinate of the same sect named Rinpung, and he became the King of the Law. The power of Rinpung's ruling house, after three

successions, was usurped by one of his subordinates named Tsangbachienko. Another three successions later, in 1643, the sixteenth year of the reign of Emperor Chung Chen of the Ming Dynasty, the fifth incarnation of Dge-hdun Grub-pa of the Gelug sect and his guru, the fourth incarnation of that office, overthrew the power of the Kagyuda sect with the help of the armed forces of Gushi Khan, a Mongolian Prince in Chinghai. From that time onwards, Tibetan people came under the rule of the leaders of the Gelug (yellow) sect.

After the Manchu troops pushed forward south of the Great Wall, the fifth incarnation of Dge-hdun Grub-pa, who was then the ruler of Tibet, came to Peking, in 1652, to offer his congratulations and asked Emperor Shun Chih to confer titles of honour on him. In 1653, when he was returning to Tibet, the Emperor conferred on him the title of "Dalai Lama" which was officially established from then on, and approved him as the head of Tibet with the full title "the Dalai Lama, King of the Law in the Western Land of the Buddha, Spiritual Lord on Earth, All-knowing, Holder of the Thunderbolt by Order of the Emperor".

At the same time, the fourth incarnation of the office of his guru, was honoured with the title "Panchen Erdeni". This title is a combination of three languages, "Pan" from Pali word Panna (wisdom), "chen" Tibetan, meaning great, "Erdeni" Mongolian, meaning jewel. Thus, Panchen Erdeni means great jewel of wisdom. While, the Emperor approved the Dalai Lama as head of Tibet, the Panchen Erdeni was appointed in charge of administrative affairs. In addition to this over all political set-up, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni

had their own feudal manorial estates separately run by them in two distinct divisions.

Later, in the sixteenth year of the reign of Emperor Chien Lung, in 1751 A.D., at the time of the Seventh Dalai Lama, the Ching Court authorized the setting up of a local government institution for Tibet, named Kasha, which was directly under the authority of a Manchu Minister stationed in Tibet. The powers, functions and organization of the Kasha were defined by the Imperial Court of Emperor Chien Lung. The Emperor laid down that Kasha was the highest administrative body in Tibet region and that it was composed of four Kaloons who were the highest officials in the local government of Tibet, second to the Regent only in rank.

The Dalai Lama was the head of the Kasha and his guru, by tradition, the Panchen Erdeni, enjoyed parallel powers with those of the Dalai Lama, although in later years the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni had each, at different times, been dominant in Tibet. A body, similar to Kasha known as Kanpolije was authorized for the Panchen Erdeni's territories, by the same Emperor Chien Lung.

The territory under the Dalai Lama was the main division with Lhasa as the Capital where he resided, while the territory under the Panchen came next with Shigatse as the main city where he resided.

It was customary for the Dalai Lama to kneel three times and kowtow nine times to receive Imperial decrees issued by the Ching Court and appointments of such higher officials as the Kaloons had to be ratified by the Ching Court.

The relations of the Dalai Lama and the Panchen

Erdeni to each other in administrative practices and to the Chinese Emperors were very complex and complicated. Emperor Chien Lung who authorized the first local government Kasha, recognized the Panchen Erdeni as the main administrative representative of Tibet and built a palace for him in Jehol, next to the Emperor's own summer palace, where he received tributes from the nomads of Tibetan region every summer, with the advice and guidance of the Panchen Erdeni. Again in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Panchen Erdeni was the strong personality in Tibet, who requested the Emperor to send an investigator to Tibet when the Regent in Lhasa was murdering successive Dalai Lamas before they reached the age to assume power. In the present century, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the only one who exerted real political power after the Fifth Dalai Lama, backed by the British imperialists when the Central Government of China was weak, became the dominant figure over entire Tibet region after forcing the Ninth Panchen Erdeni to flee into exile in Chinghai in 1923, where he died in exile. The present Tenth Panchen, the reincarnation of the dead, was born in Chinghai but did not regain his seat in Tibet until 1952, when the Central Government of China after signing the agreement for the peaceful liberation of Tibet with the Kasha, allowed the Panchen Lama to return to his seat. During the Panchen's exile, from 1923 to 1952, the Dalai Lama and the Kasha encroached on the Panchen's territory.

During the Ching Dynasty and particularly during the reign of Emperor Chien Lung, the relations between the Tibetan and other nationalities in China became

closer. In 1791, fifty-sixth year of the reign of Emperor Chien Lung, the Gurkhas from Nepal launched a large-scale aggression against Tibet on the pretext of a minor incident on the Tibet-Nepal border. The invading forces advanced to Shigatse. They captured the area west of Shigatse. The troops of the Tibetan local government were defeated by the invading Gurkhas and the whole of Tibet was in danger of being occupied. At this stage, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Erdeni sent their representatives to the Central authorities in Peking asking for help. The Ching Court immediately sent an army of 20,000 men to Tibet. With the support of the Tibetan people, the troops of the Ching Court succeeded in driving out the invaders who had occupied Houtsang area of Tibet, in May 1792.

In the closing years of the Ching Dynasty and the beginning of the founding of the Republic, relations between Tibet and the rest of the motherland were seriously impaired because of the intensified efforts of the imperialists to incite the reactionaries in Tibet to carry out traitorous activities against the motherland of China.

The British imperialists, who were ruling India and Nepal at that time, instigated the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, in 1923, when the Central Government of China was weak, to declare "independence" for Tibet. Although with this intention, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, backed by the British, took some steps towards that end like causing the assassination or exile of the influential patriotic nobles and guru lamas who refused to support such a declaration, including the forcing of the Panchen Erdeni's exile, it did not materialize.

In 1930, the Kuomintang Central Government of China sent an official to Tibet to contact the local authorities there and set up an office of the Central Government, in Lhasa. In the same year, the local government of Tibet also sent its representative Konchio Trongnier, to Nanking and set up an office of the Tibetan local authorities there.

When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama died, on December 17, 1933, the local government of Tibet, in accordance with traditional practice, reported this to the Kuomintang government in Nanking, on January 1st, 1934. In April of the same year, the Kuomintang government sent Huang Mu-sung as a special envoy to Tibet to express condolences. Huang arrived in Lhasa in September and bestowed a posthumous title on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. He also set up in Lhasa an Office of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs.

Following the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Central Government of China approved the appointment of prelate Rabchen Hutuktu as Regent to administer Tibetan affairs until the present Dalai Lama, the Fourteenth, assumed power. Prelate Rabchen Hutuktu, reflecting the patriotic will of the lamas and laymen of Tibet, worked to cement the ties between Tibet and the motherland of China.

In the winter of 1938, the local government of Tibet found the incarnation of the Dalai Lama at Tangtsai, Huanchung county, Chinghai province, and asked the Central Government of the Kuomintang to send a senior official to Tibet to preside over the installation of the holy throne. In March 1939, the

Kuomintang Government sent Wu Chung-hsin, Chairman of the Commission for Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs, to Tibet. On February 22, 1940, the ceremony of the installation of the then 5 year old Fourteenth Dalai Lama, presided over by Wu Chung-hsin, was held in the Pota-la Palace.

Thereafter, the British imperialists and the local reactionaries of Tibet, conspired to oust the Regent prelate Rabchen Hutuktu who was patriotic and who could not be influenced by them against the motherland of China. He was administering the Tibetan affairs under the Central Government of China till the infant Dalai Lama who was only five years of age then, assumed power after reaching the competent age.

This, of course, was not to the liking of the British imperialists and the reactionaries in Tibet. They spread slanders about prelate Rabchen Hutuktu and succeeded in forcing him to resign in 1941. But they did not stop there. They framed up false charges against him, produced false evidence of an alleged "plot to revolt" and, in 1947, put him under arrest and murdered him. They also poisoned to death Chochotsering, father of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who was closely related to prelate Rabchen Hutuktu and who had the interest of the motherland at heart.

After prelate Rabchen Hutuktu resigned from office, one of the most reactionary imperialist henchman, prelate Tagcha became the Regent. Thereafter, headed by prelate Tagcha, other most reactionary elements like Lokongwa, Lozong Drashi, Shagob-ba, Lhalu, Shasu and Surkong became the rulers in Tibet. They made no secret of their intention of breaking away from the



motherland and turning Tibet into an imperialist colony. In 1950, after some disagreements among the leading clique, prelate Tagcha resigned.

After prelate Tagcha relinquished his post as Regent, in the spring of 1951, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama "assumed power". Following this assumption of power, the Dalai Lama appointed Kaloon Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme and four others as plenipotentiaries of the Tibetan local government to conduct negotiations in Peking, for the peaceful liberation of Tibet and to end the centuries old serfdom. By then, the conspiracy of the U.S. and British imperialists to obstruct direct negotiations between Tibet and the motherland of China had gone completely bankrupt.

On May 23, 1951, the Seventeen-Article Agreement on the Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet between the Central People's Government and the Tibetan local government was signed in Peking.

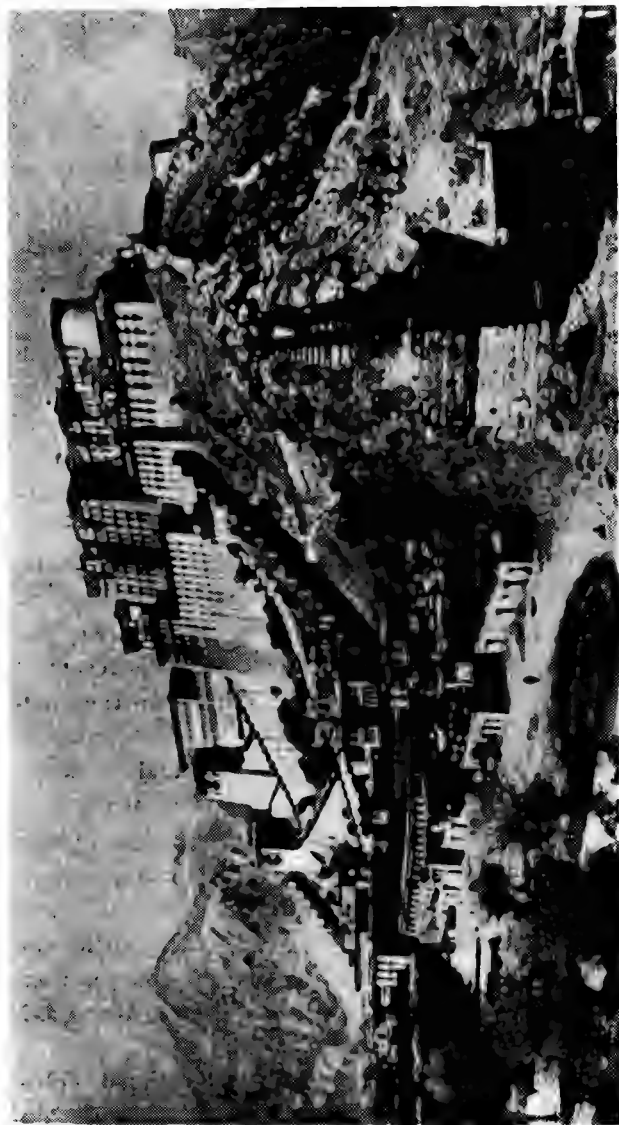
## POTA-LA PALACE

In the afternoon of September 16, 1966, we climbed the Pota-la Palace, in the company of Yang, the Director of the foreign affairs office in Lhasa, the doctor who was ready with an oxygen pillow to help us in case we needed it and some other friends who were familiar with the complicated architectural structure of this wonderful building on the top of the hill.

The Pota-la Palace was the centre of the reactionary rule in Tibet for generations. This was the place used by the reactionary feudal upper strata of lamas and laymen as their headquarters, specially, during the eight years preceding the rebellion of March 1959, for conspiracies and plots against the Central Government of China on the instigation of the Anglo-American imperialists and Indian reactionaries.

The palace itself is a unique architectural structure, irregularly built by adding rooms and apartments, from time to time, during the course of three hundred years, without any original plan, blue-print or design, but to the taste of a number of reincarnations of the Dalai Lama, starting from the Fifth and ending with the Fourteenth who was abducted to India by the reactionary upper strata rebels of Tibet during the March '59 rebellion.

Long before the Dalai Lama was appointed political head of Tibet by the Chinese Emperor, the seventh



*The Pota-la Palace is a thirteen storied structure, more than half of which is embedded in the hill with dig in room space in such a way that all thirteen storeys cannot be seen from a distance.*



*In the afternoon of September 16, 1966, we climbed the Pota-la Palace.*

century Tibetan King Srontsan Gampo had built his castle on this hill. That castle had been destroyed during the tribal wars in Tibet, at a later stage. The work on the present building had started in the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama, in mid seventeenth century.

The internal structure called the red palace was completed during that time. It was round this building that the additions had come up later by stages. Upto date, the crimson coloured outer walls of the red palace could be seen surrounded by the white walls added later. All the work had been done by manual labour employing the serfs for the job without any payment.

The Pota-la Palace is a thirteen- storied structure, more than half of which is embedded in the hill with dug in room space in such a way that all thirteen storeys cannot be seen from a distance. No single storey is having a continuous level across the entire building. The stone ramp that runs round, rises from the base of the hill to a height of about 440 feet reaching the ground floor of a section of the palace structure. The brick walls of the building are sloping inwards from the base. The built in window-frames which are wide at the bottom and narrow at the top are also slanting inwards. The number of rooms in each floor gradually drops in symmetry with the inward slope of the hill as it goes up. The flights to the upper storeys are of unequal lengths. The structural base area of this hill is about 900 feet long. The height of the whole structure including the structural base area is about 750 feet. The entire palace seems as if it has grown out of the hill.

The upper floors are built with medium size round logs placed together very closely to touch each other, with both ends resting on the walls, covering the whole floor area like a mat. The floor had been plastered by spreading white gravel and earth dust on these logs and hammering them together after sprinkling water on it.

The Dalai Lama's apartment, including his bed-room, is on the thirteenth floor which looked like an enclosure on the side of the flat roof. His bed-room is a small room of about 9 feet by 12 feet. Other rooms



*In the background is the Dalai Lama's apartment on the roof of the Pota-la Palace.*

also of this apartment are equally small. They have been built in this form to resist the severe cold in the winter. The palace itself is situated at an elevation of over 13,500 feet above sea level. There were two thick mattresses on the Dalai Lama's bed, placed one over the other and a rough blanket covering them when we saw it. It was in the same position arranged by the Dalai Lama before he left the Pota-la to move into the summer palace at Norbu Lingka, in 1959, from where he was abducted to India. There was a glass case fixed to one of the walls of his bed-room in which were three gold-plated Buddha statues. A thick carpet covered the floor. Adjoining the bed-room was his study room which was little bigger. In this room, on one side there was a low, carved seat with a mattress on it and a lectern kept in front of it for resting the books when reading. On another side, against the wall, was a little longer, low, wooden seat of the same pattern. These furniture were painted with colourful designs and lacquered. The whole floor was covered with a thick carpet.

The Dalai Lama stayed in this palace only in winter. His apartment was the highest apartment in the world. There was no electricity to this palace before liberation. The rooms were lit with dim lights of butter lamps. Heating of the rooms was done by burning charcoal. During the heavy snowfall, the whole palace was covered with a thick blanket of snow, turning it into a completely white mountain peak. There was no pipe-borne water service either. The lama serfs had to carry water up, two hundred and fifty stone steps, and then climb twelve wooden ladders through dim and dark passages, inside this palace, to reach the thirteenth

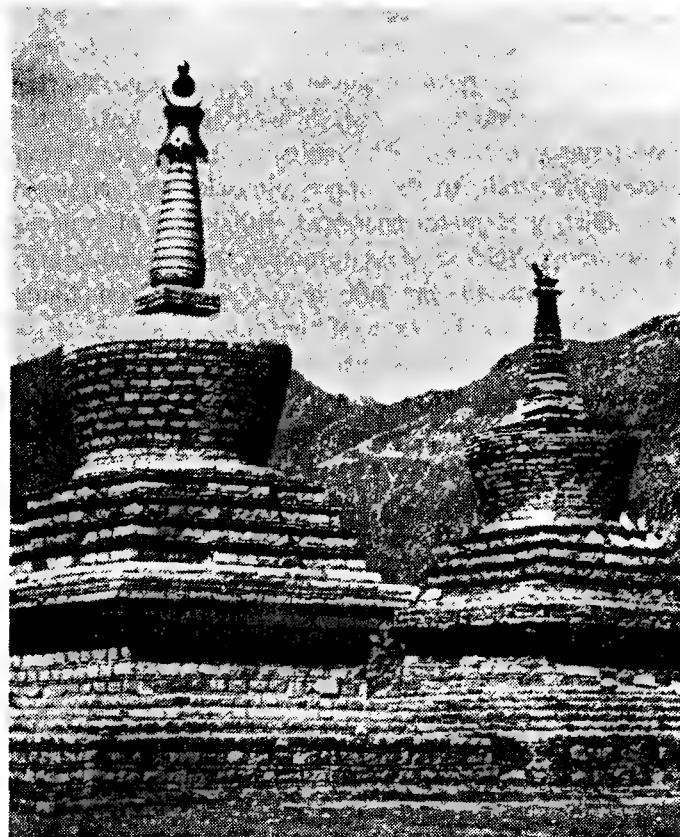
floor where the Dalai Lama lived. The Dalai Lama himself was carried up, in a palanquin, whenever he came down from his quarters. When the Dalai Lama was not in residence only the butter lamps in the chapel near the tombs were lit, where the other resident lamas came to pray daily. There were about 170 lamas in attendance in the Pota-la Palace before the rebellion.

The Dalai Lama's throne room was three floors down from his bed-room and study room. It was fairly a large room with decorated walls with various kinds of paintings. There were also a number of long flags hanging down from the roof nearly touching the floor just behind the throne, making almost a cloth screen covering that side wall. By the side of the cushioned throne was a stand holding a human skull with both sets of teeth intact. The border of the skull, the eye holes, the nose and the teeth were lined in gold. On the same stand was a small drum made of human bone and human skin. The skin was painted green. There was a small bell attached to it with a piece of human skin in such a way that when the drum was caught in the centre and shaken the bell hit the face and produced a peculiar kind of music. We could not gather, exactly for what purposes these two deadly instruments were used by the Dalai Lama. In the glass cases, fixed to the walls, were many big and small statues of Buddhas, disciples, gods and demons.

There were nine tombs of the previous 'bodies' of the Dalai Lama, built inside the Pota-la Palace. Since the Dalai Lama is a continuous being through incarnation, his previous bodies were made to rest inside the same palace. Of these, the tomb of the Fifth Dalai



*By the side of the cushioned throne was a stand holding a human skull with both sets of teeth intact. The border of the skull, the eye holes, the nose and the teeth were lined in gold. It was mounted on a carved holder.*



*The Dagabas in the Pota-la Palace premises.*

Lama during whose time the palace was built and the one that of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama which was the last to build, were bigger in size than the other tombs. These two sprang from the floor of the red palace section and shot up through three storeys in the shape of two high Dagabas. Each tomb was about sixty feet

in height. There were three-storied pavilions built round these tombs to cover them completely. The central part of the pavilion floors were cut away allowing room for the tombs to rise through them, leaving the borders as a balcony. The entire tomb from the lower rectangular vault to the upper pinnacle was plastered with thick gold plates encrusted with jewels of various kinds and colours such as turquoise, rubies and pearls.

The scenes of the life of the dead Dalai Lama were painted on the walls of the outer structure.

The size of a tomb, we were told, was determined by the length of time the incarnation lasted and the amount of gold and silver accumulated to build the tomb. All these tombs, except that of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, were in dim rooms without windows. The pavilion covering the tomb of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had windows on two side walls.

The rectangular vault of the tomb contained the personal property of the Dalai Lama, specially, the gifts received by him made of gold, grains and tea. The Dalai Lama's body was placed inside the bell-shaped sphere of the tomb in the seated position of the Buddha with crossed legs, after plastering it into a golden statue. Immediately after the death, the body of the Dalai Lama was bathed in salt water. Then the body was kept in the seated position with crossed legs and plastered with clay. The clay plastered body was, then, plastered with gold leaves turning it into a golden statue and dressed it in his best robe. Then the body in that seated position was placed in the bell-shaped sphere of the tomb surrounded by his favourite scriptures, writing material, articles of daily use such as cups and plates,

and closed up. After the enclosing ceremony a butter lamp was lit up in the outside chapel which was continued to be lit up every night throughout centuries.

The three-storied outer pavilions which covered the big tombs had tall wooden book-racks with hundreds of cages like pigeon-holes, fixed to the side walls, rising upto the roof. Every cage contained either some ola books, scrolls or manuscripts. The upper cages could only be reached by climbing a ladder. There was a ladder leaned against the rack. Some of the walls were painted with the pictures of Buddhas disciples, gods and demons.

Almost every floor of these pavilions had incense burning stands.

Since the Dalai Lama was the head of the local government of Tibet, his residence, the Pota-la Palace was also used as the headquarters of the local government. Some of the rooms of the palace were used as administrative offices. There were also three treasuries inside the palace. The first was the private treasury of the Dalai Lama which no one else except the Dalai Lama himself had access to. The second was the treasury of the Pota-la monastery. The third was the treasury of the local government. The first one contained the personal wealth of the Dalai Lama, accumulated through years of exploitation, in gold, silver and silk. The second contained the monies and articles collected from the serfs residing in the manorial estates owned by the palace for the needs of the lamas attached to the Pota-la monastery and for their festivals. The third contained the collection of the local government in the form of taxes and other forms of dues. This could only be

opened in the presence of all the ministers (Kaloons) of the local government (Kasha).

Immediately after the agreement for the peaceful liberation of Tibet was signed, in Peking, by the representatives of the Dalai Lama, on his advice, in 1951, with the Central Government of China, the reactionary upper strata of the lamas and laymen of Tibet who were conspiring against the agreement persuaded the Dalai Lama to remove all the gold and silver from the Pota-la Palace, secretly, across the Tibet border to Sikkim. The traitorous clique of the feudal serf owners who made their headquarters in Kalimpong, in India, used some of these monies along with the finances of the U.S. imperialists to organize the rebellion in Tibet, in March, 1959.

The weight of the gold treasure of the Pota-la Palace, thus, secretly removed was one thousand mule-loads. In 1960, the Dalai Lama who was then residing in Mussoorie, in India, applied to the Indian government for permission to carry this treasure from Sikkim to Calcutta for banking. The Indian government granted permission. The load was carried by plane to Calcutta. Since the Indian government allowed this heap of gold to enter India as an unexamined, duty-free shipment, the real value of the treasure was not known to the public. There were various estimates given in India ranging from 2,000,000 pound sterling to 40,000,000 pound sterling. In permitting such legalized smuggling of gold, the reactionary Indian government had not only violated her own currency regulations but also had openly encouraged the Dalai Lama to violate the monetary laws of China.

At the foot of the Pota-la hill, there was a misera-

ble-looking small village with mud huts enclosed by a parapet wall. The residents of this village were the serfs who were engaged, without any pay, for the maintenance of the Pota-la Palace. In this small village there was a prison where the accused were imprisoned under the orders of the Dalai Lama. There was also a dungeon under the Pota-la Palace containing poisonous scorpions, into which prisoners were thrown for quicker killing. When this dungeon was found after the March rebellion, there were human skulls and bones in it.

During the March '59 rebellion, the armed rebels used the Pota-la Palace as their headquarters. Hundreds of them with rifles and guns took residence in almost all the floors. They used the rooms and corridors as toilets and ransacked the shrine rooms. They were finally forced to surrender by the People's Liberation Army. Thereafter, the palace was completely cleaned up and at the time of our visit we saw how the Tibetan workers were plastering the old walls on the roof compounds, beating down white gravel and earth dust after sprinkling water.

The Pota-la Palace has, now, gone into the list of archeological monuments in China. It is now one among the many palaces of the feudal rulers of Chinese provinces before liberation. Just like the Imperial Palaces in Peking, the Pota-la Palace in Lhasa attracts visitors from all parts of Tibet who were not allowed to enter its inner chambers when the Dalai Lama was in occupation. Electricity has been extended to the palace. It is now maintained as a museum.

## NORBU LINGKA PALACE AND MARCH '59 REBELLION

We visited the Summer Palace of the Dalai Lama in the morning of September 17, 1966. In Tibetan it was called the Norbu Lingka Palace. Norbu Lingka means Jewel Park. The Summer Palace was in this park which was the most beautiful stretch of natural park-land in Lhasa, not more than a mile away from the Pota-la Palace. It was full of forest trees with no undergrowth, covering an extent of about half a square mile of completely flat land surrounded by high mountain cliffs all round except the gap through which the approach road ran towards it from the city centre. This was the main camp of the reactionary upper strata of Tibet, during the March '59 rebellion. This park is now known as the People's Park.

The palace garden was enclosed by a ten-foot wall running round it with a high structural gate-way at the entrance. The gate-way was in typical Tibetan architecture with a projecting balcony from where the Dalai Lama used to address the crowds on important occasions or witness the performances on festival days.

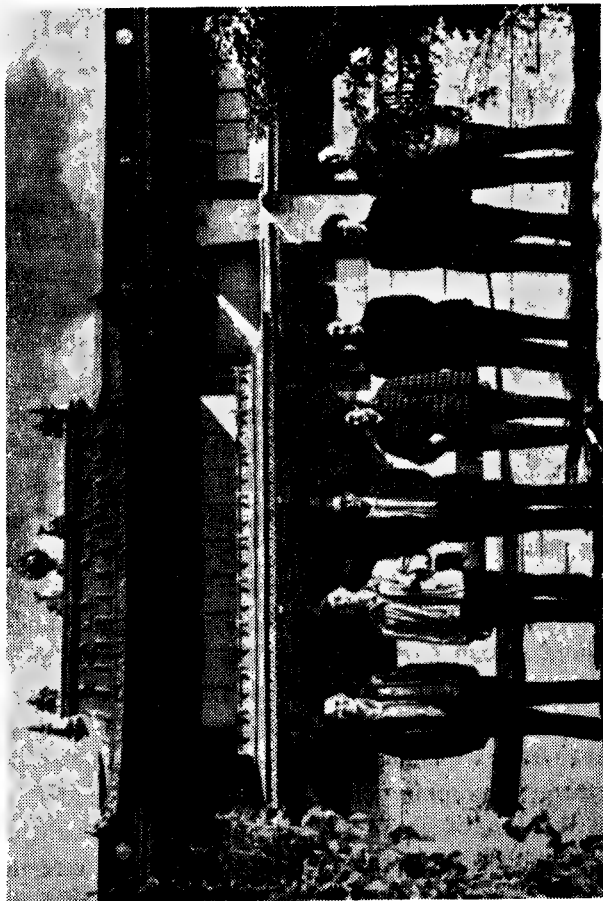
There were two palaces, one old and the other new and a pavilion known as the "Ferry Boat to Eternity" inside this park, in addition to a number of dwellings for the Dalai Lama's guards, retainers and tutors. The new palace had been constructed in 1955

to which the Dalai Lama moved in from the old palace leaving that for other attendant lamas.

Inside the gateway was a paved path that lay through the tall trees far into the park. In addition to the forest trees, there was an orchard full of apple, peach, pear, walnut, cherry and other kinds of fruit trees in full bearing. We plucked some apples from one of those trees and ate as we walked inside the park. From this foot-path, another path deviated to the right towards a high yellow coloured wall that ran down through the trees, parallel to the main path, in which there was another gateway to enter the palace garden. To the right of this gateway, along the wall, were some iron cages. Inside the cage at the corner was a lonely bear representing, perhaps, the last link of a disappearing zoo. On the other side of the wall was the palace garden. It was very neatly kept with beautiful flower beds, in full bloom. The radiant red roses and young yellow dahlias gave added attraction to the palace compound where groups of shade trees and creepers increased its enchantment.

The new palace was a two-storey rectangular building about seventy five-feet long. The walls were sloping inwards keeping to the traditional Tibetan architectural pattern. They were plastered in cream colour and the window frames painted in brown. On the top of the roof there were some golden fixtures. The ground floor had a number of small rooms, rather dark, with no proper sunlight penetrating into them. These were the rooms for body-guards, attendants and servants of the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama lived upstairs. The upstairs rooms were larger than the rooms below. Every inch of the inside walls and the ceilings of the rooms





*The Norbu-Lingka Palace was a two-storey rectangular building about seventy-five feet long.*

were decorated with paintings of the Buddhas, gods, demons and the stories relating to Tibetan Buddhism.

The Dalai Lama's bed-room was a small room of eight feet by ten feet. There was in this room a low, wide, wooden bed the frame of which was full of decorative carvings. It was painted and lacquered. The bedding that the Dalai Lama left behind when he was abducted by the reactionary rebels in March 1959, were still there, as they were at the time of his departure. A heavy coarse blanket covered the padded quilt of cotton in the bed. The walls of the room were painted fully with figures of Buddhas and stories relating to those Buddhas, in yellow, gold and red lacquer. There was a bathroom adjoining his bed room, fitted with modern fixtures but with no running water. Evidently, this had been built expecting a pipe-borne water service to come up at a later stage. The Pota-la Palace had no such modern facilities.

The largest room in the building was the Dalai Lama's throne room. It was a twenty-five feet square. The Dalai Lama presided over all ceremonies and functions in this room. This golden throne had been presented to the Dalai Lama as a gift from the Khampas in the name of "four rivers and six ranges" which was an underground organization of Khampa gangsters, in Tibet, who lived in looting, plundering, highway robbing and terrorizing the people of Tibet.

The other rooms, upstairs, were designed for various other purposes such as scripture reading, meeting religious dignitaries and ministers and holding conferences. All rooms were carpeted and in each of them were low, wooden divans with carved lecterns kept in front of

them for scripture reading. In many rooms there were glass cases containing the statues of the Buddhas, gods and demons. Some rooms were draped with hanging banners from the ceiling dropping down almost touching the floor. Some murals displayed the historical background of Tibet and showed the seventh century wedding of the Tibetan King Srontsan Gampo with Han princess Wen Cheng and the history of Tibetan Buddhism.

The structure in the pond called the "Ferry Boat to Eternity" was in the park area outside the palace wall. It was a summer pavilion, built of stone slabs, inside an artificial pond with stagnant water. There was a stone bridge to reach the pavilion at the centre of the pond.

The palace garden was opened to the public, once a year, at a festival in June. Other times only the Dalai Lama's guests were allowed to enter.

The Dalai Lama had preferred this palace to the lofty but gloomy Pota-la, so much so, that he had moved into this palace early in March, 1959, even before the winter was over in Lhasa.

The dramatic events in Tibetan history took place four days after the Dalai Lama moved into this Summer Palace, perhaps for the last time, on March 6, 1959. On the tenth of March, the Dalai Lama was to attend a theatrical performance at the Military Area Command of the People's Liberation Army, in Lhasa, arranged on the Dalai Lama's request, communicated to the Command some weeks earlier. The leading officials of the Command were ready to receive the honoured guest at the auditorium where the performance was to take place, in full ceremony, with cameras and photographers. A water-

cart had sprinkled water on the road to lay the dust for the Dalai Lama's car, the first motor vehicle ever to have reached Lhasa in its centuries long history, which was a gift to the Dalai Lama by the Central Government of China, in 1956. The Dalai Lama failed to appear at the appointed time. A radio mechanic came towards the auditorium running and conveyed the news that the Dalai Lama was being held back by an armed rebel force, in the Summer Palace, at Norbu Lingka. The rebels were killing some people near the park and there was great panic in the whole area.

Immediately afterwards, a rebel group of armed mounted Tibetans paraded the streets, leading a horse on whose back the dead body of a progressive noble man whom they had killed was placed, to terrify the people. The rebellion, organized by the reactionary upper strata feudal serf owners on the instigation of the Anglo-American imperialists and Indian reactionaries, had just begun.

A meeting of the leading rebels of the Kasha and the three big monasteries of Tibet had been held in the Norbu Lingka, that day, and declared "independence" for Tibet. A message had been dispatched to Kalimpong, in India, where the rebel headquarters had been set up, to spread the news of the declaration and the rebellion.

Three thousand armed rebels, among whom were many Khampa gangsters and highway robbers, had camped in the Norbu Lingka forest park. They had made fortifications against the wall surrounding the park. They prevented the Dalai Lama from contact with the outside world. Two stray practice shots by Khampas had hit the palace where Dalai Lama was residing. One shot

had pierced the window in the room where the Dalai Lama was seated and had passed near his head. This had made the Dalai Lama very angry against the Khampas and the Dalai Lama had mentioned this in a letter to General Tan Kuan-san of the People's Liberation Army Command in Lhasa, on March 11, 1959, the day after the rebellion began, with the following words:

"Reactionary evil elements are carrying out activities endangering me under the pretext of ensuring my safety."

For ten days, the armed rebels terrorised the whole city of Lhasa and the suburbs, torturing people who were sympathetic to the Central Government and who opposed the reactionary upper strata ruling clique and conscripting men into their army under threat of death. Some of the upper strata lamas themselves had taken up arms and joined the rebel forces.

During these panic-stricken days, the Dalai Lama had written three letters to General Tan Kuan-san in reply to the General's three letters regarding the situation that was developing. The Dalai Lama's letters showed that he had, by that time, become a prisoner in the hands of the rebels who had detained him in the Norbu Lingka.

In the night of March 17, 1959, the rebels abducted the Dalai Lama from the Norbu Lingka Palace and with his relatives, he was taken away from Lhasa to the area called Loka, about two hundred miles away, in Southern Tibet, on the way to India and finally, when the rebellion failed in Lhasa, crossed the boundary of Tibet, for ever, on March 29, and entered India. It was estimated that about 7,000 rebels had crossed over to India imme-

diately after the rebellion was suppressed in the Loka area.

During the first few days of rebellion in Lhasa, the reports of atrocities committed by the rebels reached the headquarters of the People's Liberation Army but they referred them to the local government-Kasha demanding that Kasha act to restore order. The People's Liberation Army personnel remained in barracks closing its compound, awaiting orders from Peking. The Central Government offices in different places such as the post office, the bank, the state trading house and the schools also closed their gates and the working personnel stayed inside. The Tibetan employees of these offices sought permission to bring in their families through fear of harassment by the rebels, into the compound of these buildings, which was granted. Since Kasha was the lawful local government, the People's Liberation Army did not yet go into action but kept the Central Government in Peking informed of the developments.

During the first ten days the rebels had gathered by conscription under threat, about 20,000 strong rebel force, about 7,000 in Lhasa and over 12,000 in the Loka area.

At dawn, around 3:40, on March 20, the rebels started the major attack in the city of Lhasa. Firing began almost at the same time from Pota-la Palace, Norbu Lingka Palace and the Yo-wang hill, the highest point in Lhasa. They charged the transport head office and the other Central Government offices and attacked the People's Liberation Army garrison.

On orders from the Central Government in Peking, at 8 o'clock in the morning, the People's Liberation Army

went into action. One company, after a brief encounter, took over the Yo-wang hill, by 1:30 that afternoon. Only a few rebels were killed or captured. Others ran away beyond the hill.

The Norbu Lingka, where 3,000 rebels had camped, was taken by the People's Liberation Army by seven that evening. A few rebels were killed. A large number of them were captured. Some escaped into the other areas. By nightfall, the only two centres that the rebels held were the Pota-la Palace and the Jokhan monastery. The People's Liberation Army planned out a scheme to get the rebels to surrender without a fight which would save the two buildings. They invited the two patriotic Kaloons who remained loyal, Ngapo Ngawang-jigme and Sampo Tsewang-yentzen, to go out with megaphones to call upon the rebels to surrender with the guarantee that their lives would be safe if they did so. The two Kaloons gave the call as planned. The rebels talked it over the whole night and, at nine in the morning, they came out of these two buildings with both hands raised.

The rebellion in the city of Lhasa, thus, was wiped out in forty-seven hours. Thereafter, the People's Liberation Army moved out to clear the suburbs and the rural areas.

By April 5, the People's Liberation Army had disarmed 5,600 rebel troops. About 600 of them were wounded or killed, but the rest were captured. About 1,400 had runaway to other areas outside Lhasa. In Lhasa 10,395 rifles with 10 million rounds of ammunition and 79 artillery pieces with 20,000 shells had been captured. The weapons were of British, American and French make. Even old guns from Zarist Russia were

among the captured firearms.

Although four of the six Kaloons of the Kasha led the rebellion and three of them took the Dalai Lama out of Lhasa under duress, the Kasha was still recognized by the Central Government of China as the legally constituted local government of Tibet. When the Central Government received information of the Dalai Lama and these three Kaloons accompanied by their relatives, crossing over to India, the Central Government in Peking made a declaration, under the hand of Premier Chou En-lai of the State Council of China, on March 28, 1959, abolishing the local government of Tibet, and instructing the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region to take over its powers.

In the following months, several anti-China statements were issued in the name of the Dalai Lama who was then twenty-four years old, from India, by his reactionary advisers, in consultation with the Indian reactionary circles, Chiang Kai-shek agents and the Anglo-American imperialists.

## IMPERIALIST INTRIGUE IN TIBET

The British and American imperialists had attempted to make the Tibet region of China an imperialist colony, since the second half of the nineteenth century.

The imperialists had taken advantage of the reactionary and dark serf system and feudal political set up in Tibet to make infiltrations through various methods, at all times, when the imperial Central Government of China became weak due to internal strife. Instigated by the British imperialists, countless cases of murder and poisoning had taken place among the high ranking and power-yielding officials surrounding the Dalai Lama, for power and gain. They had often made the Dalai Lama their puppet, imposed their will on him and even did him to death when they deemed it necessary. For instance, it was not a secret that the Eleventh Dalai Lama met with sudden death in the Pota-la Palace in 1855, when he was only 18 years old. Again in 1875, the Twelfth Dalai Lama faced a sudden death in the Pota-la Palace at the age of 20. In 1923, during the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Ninth Panchen Erdeni was forced out of Tibet. In 1947, the guru prelate Rabchen Hutuktu, the Regent of the Dalai Lama for eight years, was arrested and strangled to death in prison. In the same year, the father of the present Fourteenth Dalai Lama, named

Chochotsering, who was a relative of guru prelate Rabchen Hutuktu was poisoned to death for this patriotic ideas in order to facilitate the control over the Dalai Lama. In 1950, the Tibetan guru prelate Geda who worked for the peaceful liberation of Tibet was poisoned, in Chamdo, by a British imperialist agent named Robert Webster Ford who had taken residence there at that time.

The first armed attack on Lhasa by the British imperialists was in 1904, when the British invading army under the command of colonel Young Husband marched into Tibet from British occupied India and seized the city of Lhasa by force of arms. Having seized Lhasa, Colonel Young Husband forced a treaty on the Regent, at the Pota-la Palace, in the absence of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama who had fled to the interior of China to avoid the British troops, acquiring many concessions, in Tibet, for trade and submitted an indemnity bill for 750,000 pound sterling to the then Chinese Emperor, in Peking, and collected the amount from him, in addition to the concessions in Tibet. From that time onwards, the British imperialists had access to Lhasa, by way of trade, through India. They established very close relations with a handful of upper strata feudal serf owners, in Tibet, who had common interests with the imperialists in exploiting the people. They instigated this upper strata reactionary clique to go against the Central Government of China with the intention of making Tibet a colony of British imperialism. They succeeded in creating a pro-British clique bent on severing Tibet from its motherland and drawing it into the imperialist sphere of influence.

In 1911, after the outbreak of the revolution in China for the overthrow of the Ching (Manchu) rule, the British imperialists lost no time in inciting this upper strata reactionary pro-British clique to stage a revolt, in Lhasa, against the tottering Imperial Central Government. The revolt began by expelling the official representative of the Ching Court, in Lhasa. Many Tibetan patriots including the patriotic lamas were murdered. But the revolt did not succeed.

The next plot of the British imperialists was a diplomatic move to sever Tibet from the jurisdiction of the Central Government of China. With the full cooperation of the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet, they engineered the 'Simla Conference' of 1913-14, a conference between 'China, Great Britain and Tibet', to bring pressure on the then warlord government of China to accede to a British manufactured treaty of separation of Tibet from the jurisdiction of China, which was a deliberate design to annex Tibet as a colony to the British Empire through the colonial government of India. The Chinese representative to the 'Simla Conference' refused to sign the proposed treaty and the treaty was never recognised by the Chinese government.

Thereafter, the British imperialists instigated the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet, in 1918, to send troops to attack the adjoining areas of Tibet such as Chamdo and Darge. Following this attack, the then British Ambassador to China offered his 'mediation' and demanded the convocation of another conference between 'China, Great Britain and Tibet' and made an attempt to get the Chinese government to sign the draft

treaty of the 'Simla Conference'. This plan also failed because of the refusal of the Chinese government.

After the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, in 1933, and the subsequent conspiracy that culminated in the resignation of the patriotic Regent guru prelate Rabchen Hutuktu in 1941, the upper strata reactionary clique who assumed control over the Kasha, instigated by the British imperialists, suddenly announced, in 1943, the establishment of a so-called "Bureau of Foreign Affairs", in Tibet. The Kuomintang government at that time noted this British plot and ordered its office, in Lhasa, not to have anything to do with this bogus "Bureau".

The next diplomatic move by the British imperialists, with the complete agreement of the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet, to sever Tibet region from China, was an attempt to impose, clandestinely, on the foreign countries a tacit recognition of Tibet as a separate state at an international conference. In 1947, an Asian Conference was convened in New Delhi, India, to which all Asian countries were invited. Tibet was also invited as a separate "country". The pennant of Tibetan Buddhism with "snow mountain and lions" was deliberately displayed at this conference as the 'national flag' of Tibet, side by side, with the 'national flags' of other Asian countries. On the map of Asia displayed at the conference hall, Tibet was drawn outside the Chinese boundary in an attempt to show Tibet as a separate country with 'independent' status. The Chinese delegation to the conference viewed this attempt with indignation and lodged a strong protest against it and forced the conference organizers to make

a correction.

Failing in all these attempts, the British imperialists through one of their agents who was residing in Tibet, at that time, named Sir Basil Gould, openly declared that China should make Tibet a 'buffer state' between China and India 'to avoid conflict with India'.

The normal pattern of events, after the Second World War, has clearly shown that where the British imperialists had failed the American imperialists had stepped in to continue their imperialist tradition. Tibet was no exception.

After the victory of the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the U.S. imperialists stepped into the shoes of Japanese militarism and tried to turn China into a colony of U.S. imperialism. On the one hand, the U.S. imperialists helped and instigated the Kuomintang reactionaries to launch an all-out attack against the liberated areas, and on the other, when the situation of the Chinese People's War of Liberation became increasingly unfavourable to the Kuomintang reactionaries, they resorted to all kinds of plots and schemes in their attempt to thwart the complete liberation of the Chinese people. It was at this stage that the U.S. imperialists began their conspiratorial activities to get their fingers into Tibet. After the Japanese surrender, the U.S. imperialists actively poked their nose into Tibet and worked, hand in hand, with the British imperialists to plot for the so-called 'independence of Tibet'.

In October 1947, the U.S. imperialists persuaded the reactionary clique who controlled the Kasha in Tibet, to organize a 'trade mission' led by a Kaloon

named Tsipon Shagob-ba to visit the United States of America, Britain and other countries. Under the cover of 'trade mission', the U.S. imperialists organized this delegation to visit the United States of America, specially, to receive secret instructions from the U.S. government on how to carry out the plot to sever Tibet from the motherland of China.

The 'trade mission' left Lhasa, in early 1948, and arrived in Nanking, the Capital of the Kuomintang Central Government in China. The Kuomintang government tried to dissuade this 'trade mission' from going abroad and told them that if they insisted on going abroad they should take Chinese passports. While showing tacit compliance, the Tibetan reactionary group went into secret dealings with the U.S. ambassador, in Nanking, John L. Stuart, who told them to go to the U.S. consulate in Hongkong. The American consul, in Hongkong, endorsed visas on the 'passports' secretly printed by the Kasha itself for this trip and the 'trade mission' set off by air and arrived in the United States of America, on July 19, 1948. After their arrival in U.S., as arranged by the U.S. government, the members of this 'trade mission' went on making political statements against the motherland of China and betrayed the interests of the Tibetan people.

The events that followed proved that the 'trade mission' was a name board to carry on secret negotiation with the U.S. imperialist masters to undermine the interests of the motherland of China.

In the summer of 1949, the Chinese People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtse River and liberated Nanking and Shanghai and the Kuomintang

government of Chiang Kai-shek fled to Canton. The People's Liberation Army, in the Northwest, also liberated Sian and was advancing towards the remoter northwest.

The whole mainland was about to be liberated completely when a so-called "campaign to drive out the Hans" broke out in Lhasa jointly engineered by the U.S. and British imperialists and the Tibetan reactionaries. On July 8, 1949, the Tibetan local government Kasha, suddenly notified all staff members of the office of the Kuomintang government in Lhasa and their families to leave Tibet immediately. At the same time, the Kasha cabled from Kalimpong, in India, a message to the commission for Mongolian and Tibetan affairs of the Kuomintang government which read:

"In order to prevent the Communist Party from poking its nose into Tibet, all staff members of the office of the Central Government in Tibet are requested to leave Tibet and they and their families have been notified to return to the interior within the set time."

The aim of the U.S. and British imperialists and the Tibetan reactionaries was to sever Tibet region from China, prevent the Chinese People's Liberation Army from entering Tibet and continue to enslave the Tibetan people.

Shortly after the "campaign to drive out the Hans" in August 1949, the U.S. imperialists directly dispatched a person called Lowell Thomas, a top special agent, from New York, to Lhasa to carry out conspiratorial activities there. In October 1949, when Lowell Thomas returned to the U.S. from Tibet, the American newspapers clamoured that the U.S. was ready to recognize Tibet as an independent state and support its application

for membership of the United Nations and that it would give 'military aid' to the Tibetan local government.

At the Exhibition Hall of the Tibetan revolution, in Lhasa, I saw a letter written by Lowell Thomas, from New York under his own signature, to the Kasha headed by the Dalai Lama, after he returned to the U.S. from Lhasa, communicating the contents of a discussion he had had with the U.S. President Truman regarding the U.S. assistance to the local government of Tibet to fight against the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

This letter which was addressed to the 'Council of the Dalai Lama' by Lowell Thomas from Hammersley Hill, Paxling, New York, on May 10, 1950, informed the Dalai Lama that the United States was prepared to assist the Dalai Lama and his 'government'. He had stated in this letter that he had met President Truman on November 1, 1949 and that the President had said it was his hope to organize the "moral forces of the world against the immoral" and that he had communicated with the Dalai Lama regarding this. The President realized the "tremendous benevolent moral power of his Holiness the Dalai Lama and of Buddhists". Lowell Thomas continued in his letter, "I told President Truman that I met you in your foreign office last summer about the threat to Tibet's independence and explained your urgent need for assistance. I asked him if America could supply your army with modern weapons and sufficient advisers to instruct your soldiers in their proper use. President Truman did not commit himself to affirmative or negative. He is sympathetic with your country's problems."

By the end of 1949, the entire China had been liberated with the exception of Tibet and Taiwan, and



the establishment of the Central People's Government was declared in Peking, on October 1, 1949.

To complete the great cause of liberating the entire mainland, the Chinese People's Liberation Army decided to enter Tibet and started preparations for this, in 1950. The advance troops reached the Kantse area, east of the Kingsha River. In the meantime, the Central Government of China decided to send the Buddhist guru prelate Geda who was the Vice-Chairman of the provincial government of Sikang, a province adjacent to Tibet region, to Lhasa, to persuade the Dalai Lama and the Kaloons of the Kasha to negotiate with the Central Government for peaceful liberation of Tibet. When the guru prelate Geda arrived in Chamdo on July 24, he met with obstructions placed by the British imperialist agent who was residing there at that time named Robert Webster Ford who prevented guru prelate Geda from proceeding to Lhasa. On August 21, Ford poisoned the Buddhist guru prelate Geda who died the next day. Immediately after the death, his body became black and the skin came off at a touch. To hide the crime, Ford burned the corpse and sent his retinue, in custody, to Lhasa. After the liberation of Tibet, this British imperialist agent Robert Webster Ford was arrested by the People's Liberation Army.

Since the U.S. and British imperialists prevented any negotiations between the local government of Tibet-Kasha and the Central Government of China, the Central Government ordered the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet. At the instigations of the U.S. and British imperialists, the reactionaries in the Kasha directed the Tibetan local army to put up resistance and obstruction at

Chamdo. The People's Liberation Army gave a smashing blow to the Tibetan local army and, on October 19, 1950, wiped out the main force of the Tibetan local army of over five thousand men and liberated Chamdo. This shattered the scheme of the U.S. and British imperialists and the handful of Tibetan reactionaries to prevent the entry of the People's Liberation Army into Tibet and the liberation of the Tibetan people.

When this happened, a handful of reactionaries in the Kasha headed by Regent guru prelate Tagcha, in collusion with the imperialists and foreign expansionists abducted the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who was only 15 years old then, to a town called Yatung, very close to the Indian frontier and planned to take him to India. This aroused the opposition of the three major monasteries as well as the broad masses of the Tibetan people. Many Kanpos (the ecclesiastical counterpart of Kaloons) and a number of Kaloons who were with the Dalai Lama also disapproved of his flight to India and stood for negotiations with the Central People's Government.

The struggle ended in victory for the patriotic and progressive forces. Consequently, in the spring of 1951, Regent guru prelate Tagcha relinquished his post and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama "assumed power". Following his assumption of power the Dalai Lama appointed Kaloon Ngapo Ngawang-Jigme, popularly known as Apei, and four others as plenipotentiaries of the Tibetan local government to conduct negotiations, in Peking. The agreement for the peaceful liberation of Tibet negotiated under the direct leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung, containing seventeen articles was signed, on May

23, 1951 between the Central People's Government and the Tibetan local government.

Subsequent to the signing of the agreement, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, returned from Yatung to Lhasa, on August 17, 1951. On October 26, the units of the People's Liberation Army also arrived in Lhasa and were warmly welcomed by the Tibetan people, both lamas and laymen. The Tibetan people had, thus, shaken off the fetters of the imperialist forces and returned to the big family of the motherland and began to take part in its construction together with the people of all fraternal nationalities of China.

However, the U.S. and British imperialists and the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet continued to plot against the Seventeen-Article Agreement and prepared the ground for the March 1959 rebellion, basing their operational headquarters, in Kalimpong, in India. The March rebellion was suppressed, in a couple of days, by the people of Tibet with the help of the People's Liberation Army.

A number of leading reactionary rebels, who belonged to the upper strata reactionary clique of Tibet, fled to India after the suppression of the March '59 rebellion and formed an advisory council around the Fourteenth Dalai Lama who was residing in Mussoorie with the assistance of the Indian reactionaries. Instigated by the U.S. and British imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek agents, they continued their conspiratorial activities against the Tibetan region of China, making again the Indian border town of Kalimpong their base.

The Tenth Panchen Erdeni, who assumed control over the local government of Tibet as the Chairman of

the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet, in the absence of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, under a proclamation of the Central People's Government of China appointing him to that post, fell a victim to the intrigues of the reactionary clique operating from the Indian border town of Kalimpong. The Tenth Panchen Erdeni, using his authority as the head of the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet, made, in fact, preparations not for the declaration of the Tibetan Autonomous Region but for another revolt against the Central People's Government of China, in 1964, on the instigation of the conspiratorial clique in Kalimpong base. The patriotic representatives of the Preparatory Committee, assisted by the People's Liberation Army who were very vigilant, detected the scheme and took preventive action, in time, before the preparations for the revolt reached the point of an open flare up. The Tenth Panchen Erdeni was sent on compulsory leave to remould himself, and at the time of our visit to Lhasa, in September 1966, he was in Peking.

I saw, in the exhibition hall of Tibetan revolution in Lhasa, the material the Tenth Panchen Erdeni had collected in 1964, for the planned revolt including a heap of firearms, bullets, telephones, jeeps, helmets, boots, uniforms and equipment for the operation of a secret telecommunication network.

On one side of the same exhibition hall, some articles of amusement used by the Tenth Panchen Erdeni were also on display. Among them were ladies' perfumes, brassiers, jewellery, high-heeled shoes, lipsticks and wigs of foreign make. We were told that the Tenth Panchen Erdeni derived great entertainment from get-

ting the young boys dressed in ladies attire and taking pictures of them. Some of the photographs so taken by him were on display in this exhibition hall.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama who is now in India and the runaway reactionary clique round him, were being used by the U.S. imperialists and Indian reactionaries to carry on further anti-China activities. In August, 1967, the U.S. imperialists organized an anti-China conspiratorial centre in Switzerland with the attendance of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's mother, brother and a number of Tibetan reactionaries who were living with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in India. The Central People's Government of China lodged a strong protest against this with the government of Switzerland since that territory was being used by this reactionary clique for anti-China activities. A month later, in September, 1967, the U.S. imperialists organized a preaching tour for the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, in Japan, in collusion with the Japanese reactionaries, as a part of the anti-China propaganda campaign of the imperialists headed by the U.S. On September 25, 1967, the Dalai Lama left India for Japan. Before leaving India, he called on the Indian President, Vice-President and Prime Minister. He travelled on an Indian passport. All the expenses of his trip were borne by the "Readers' Digest" of the United States of America, a tool of U.S. imperialist cultural aggression in Japan. The Dalai Lama carried with him to Japan 200 Tibetan cultural relics which he had smuggled from Tibet to India, in 1959, and sold to the "Tibetan Museum" of India. With the permission of the Indian government, he took these relics to an "exhibition of Tibetan treasures" sponsored by the

Japanese reactionaries and the U.S. imperialists, in Tokyo, which he opened on September 26, 1967. The opening ceremony was attended by, among others, the officials of the U.S. Embassy in Japan, the Indian Charge d'Affaires and the officials of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. On a map hung in the "Exhibition" Hall and in the pamphlets sold there, Tibet was delineated as a separate country. The authorities of the Central Government of China issued a protest against this anti-China campaign on October 12, 1967. At the time of my writing, it was rumoured that the U.S. imperialists were making arrangements, in collusion with the Ceylon reactionary circles, to invite the Dalai Lama to Ceylon for the same purpose.

Now, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and his reactionary clique of Tibetan exploiters who were thrown out by the patriotic people of Tibet, have joined the anti-China band-waggon of the U.S. imperialists and Indian reactionaries, making Mussoorie, India, their permanent home.

## EXHIBITION IN LHASA

The Exhibition of Tibetan Revolution, in Lhasa, was an interesting place. Here, one could get all the facts and figures relating to the Tibetan social conditions before and after liberation.

In one section of the Exhibition Hall, a series of models showing the pre-liberation manors of the big feudal serf-owners and their slave stables, torture chambers and the torture implements as well as the scorpion dungeons of the Potala Palace where the prisoners were thrown into for quicker killing, were prominently displayed. The life that the lamas led in the monasteries and the devilish rituals they practised, cruel oppression of the poor lamas by the upper strata feudal lamas and their sufferings were also on exhibition.

The most exciting exhibit, in a glass case, was the full skin of a human being, skinned from head to toe. The head had been skinned with the hair intact, the face in full and the whole body down the legs and feet up to the toes.

Only through a highly skilled surgery, a man could be skinned in that fashion. Although pre-liberation Tibet had been the darkest feudal serfdom which knew no modern science and technology, the cruel and criminal skinning surgery practised by the feudal lords had been highly advanced in its technique. These skins had been used as offerings to the gods at shrines by the

lamas. They were also used to make drums.

In the Buddhist Jataka stories there are references to the Bodhisattvas donating their own eyes, head, flesh and blood whenever they had got the opportunity to do so, in order to acquire merits for the attainment of enlightenment. The lamas of Tibet had, instead of donating their own eyes, head, flesh and blood, got the other people skinned, their eyes gouged out and heads and limbs cut off to make offerings at the shrines of gods on great festival occasions. The dried hands and feet so cut off were also on display.

Of the 2,711 monasteries in Tibet, three big monasteries named Daipung, Sera and Ganden had actually controlled Tibet's reactionary political life down through the ages. The Daipung monastery had been built in 1416 A.D. The other two also dates back to the same period.

The largest of the three, Daipung, enjoyed special privileges in appointing the top clerical officials in the local government of Tibet-Kasha. During the three weeks of the Great Prayer Festival which took place in March, every year, the tax collector lamas of Daipung, who usually carried an iron rod in their hands, took over the administration of the city of Lhasa to impose taxes and fines, at will, on the traders, inhabitants and pilgrims. Whenever these lamas carrying iron rods leaned their iron rods against anyone's gate, the house holder had to make some donations. The pilgrims had to contribute to the donation basket some money before they could read the scriptures. The collection made by these lamas amounted to about 150,000 in *yuan* (Rs. 300,000), every year during this festival.



*The entrance to the Exhibition Hall in Lhasa.*

The edicts of the past Chinese Emperors had referred to Daipung as a monastery where 7,700 lamas lived. Nevertheless, their number had increased, at times, to about ten thousand.

As a big feudal land owner, Daipung had owned 185 manorial estates with about 25,000 agricultural serfs and 300 pastures with about 16,000 herdsmen.

At the March '59 rebellion, the Daipung monastery had sent 3,000 armed lamas to lead the rebel forces against the Central Government of China. They were armed with bayoneted rifles of both American and British make.

The Daipung monastery had imposed on the agricultural serfs and herdsmen, besides the ordinary payments in labour or grain for the use of land, numerous other taxes such as dog tax, cat tax, chicken tax, poll tax, birth tax and death tax whereby the jewellery of the dead such as earrings and ornaments went to the monastery. The money lending at usurious interest brought in twenty-five per cent of the income of the Daipung monastery.

The statistics on the causes that made persons become lamas disclosed the following facts: Out of 287 lamas who lived in one wing of the Daipung lamasery, 124 had been brought in by their parents when they were under the age of 14 years. 106 had entered to escape debt or corvee tax. 31 had been forced to join in fulfilment of debt or corvee tax owed to the monastery. 18 had come in for food since they were cripples unable to work. 6 only had entered the monastery to spend a religious life through conviction.

The poor lamas had a miserable time in the monastery. They were not allowed to read scriptures



*The most exciting exhibit, in a glass case, was the full skin of a human being, skinned from head to toe.*

as soon as they became lamas. They had to beg for permission and stick out their tongues as proof that they were showing a clean inside before they were permitted to read the scriptures. They were never admitted to the rooms where the sacred books were kept.

This monastery had a collection of about one hundred human skulls. Several of them were made into drums with human skins tied over the opening. It was said that such skins were taken after skinning a body alive, to make them flexible to tie to the skulls. Some skulls were made into bowls mounted in silver. There were some leg-bones of maidens made into horns, encased in silver. It was said that according to monastery rules only maidens' leg-bones could be used to make horns for the monastery. The tax collector lama of the Ganden monastery had been accused of killing twelve serfs in order to get their bones. Two skulls and two pairs of arm bones were exhibited as production of proof brought to Daipung after killing two herdsmen who were condemned to death for killing and eating a yak belonging to the monastery, in a far away pasture. These two herdsmen had been sent to a remote cold pasture to look after the yak. When they were hungry and had nothing to eat, they had killed a yak and eaten it. A lama, named Boba, had been sent with five assistants to execute the sentence passed on the two herdsmen and bring back proof.

Every manorial estate belonging to Daipung had its own jail and torture system. Jails were infested with scorpions and poisonous insects. A kind of grass called scorpion grass was used for flogging the serfs. When they were flogged with this grass, the skin came out.

Maiming by cutting off a hand or a foot was a common form of punishment. Another way of crippling was by tying the arm or the leg with a cattle skin dipped in boiling salt-water, in such a manner that as the skin dried it crippled the victim permanently.

The atrocities committed by the upper strata reactionary clique in Tibet, before and during the March, '59 rebellion organized by them and its suppression, the democratic reforms and the happy life of the liberated serfs, the economic development projects started immediately after liberation and the mobilization of the masses for their implementation were displayed in large pictures hung up in another section of the Exhibition Hall.

The statistics of agricultural and industrial production with percentages of annual increases were shown with graphs, figures and sketches.

The documents relating to the imperialist intrigue in Tibet for a number of years and also the secret documents found during the March '59 rebellion itself were among the exhibits.

## GOOD-BYE TO LHASA

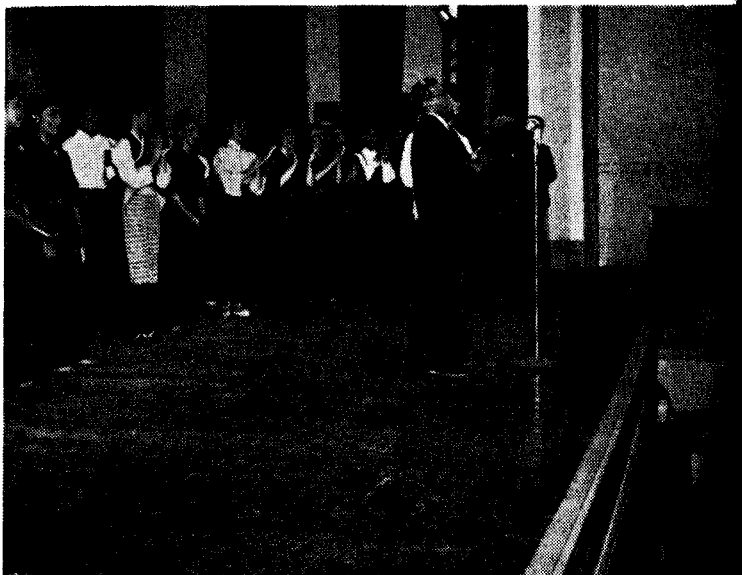
There was a cultural performance by the Tibetan Song and Dance Troupe, in the auditorium of the newly built People's Cultural Palace, in the new sector of the city of Lhasa, specially organized to welcome us. The hall was full to the capacity. There must have been about a thousand people in the audience. The portrait of Chairman Mao Tse-tung was prominently displayed in the upper centre of the stage.

The performances included the traditional Tibetan songs and dances tuned to the new revolutionary themes introduced during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The workers, peasants and soldiers alliance, in the cultural field, was quite prominent. The troupe composed of dancers and singers from these three sections.

One scene displayed how the great alliance of workers, peasants and soldiers heroically defended the motherland, in 1962, when the reactionary Indian aggressive troops attacked China over the southern borders of Tibet region.

At the conclusion of the performance, I was invited to address the gathering. After thanking the troupe for the fine revolutionary performances, I expressed my deep impression about the new Socialist Autonomous Region of Tibet where over a million former serfs and slaves, after overthrowing the tyrannical rule of the

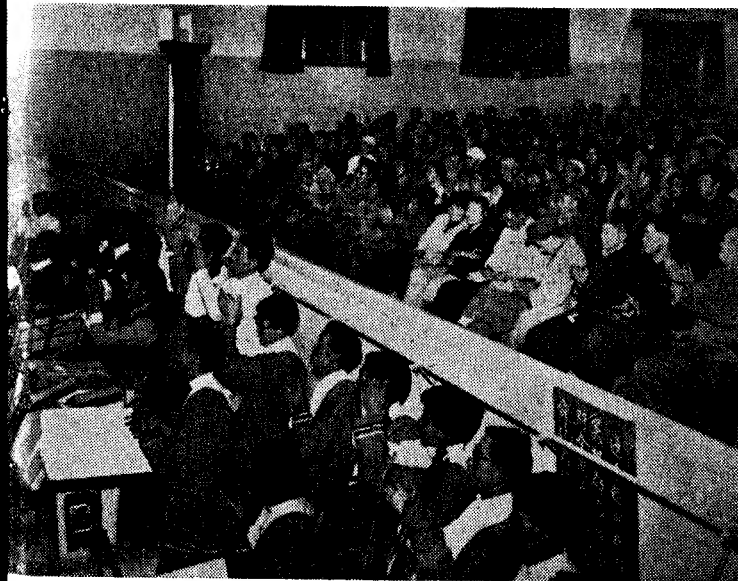


*At the conclusion of the performance*

handful of big feudal serf owners and capturing state power, have started building a paradise on the roof of the world, holding high the great red banner of Mao Tse-tung's thought.

With this performance, we completed our visit to Tibet.

The day before we left Lhasa, we were the guests at a farewell dinner given by Namji, the Mayor of



*was invited to address the gathering.*

Lhasa and his wife, Yang Tung-sheng, the first Deputy Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region and Yang, the Director of the office in charge of foreign affairs in Lhasa.

On September 19, 1966, we left Lhasa by plane for Kunming where we stayed a couple of days before we left for Peking to be in time for the National Day celebrations, on October 1, 1966.





*We wished good-bye to Yang Tung-sheng, the first Deputy Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region before we left Lhasa.*

